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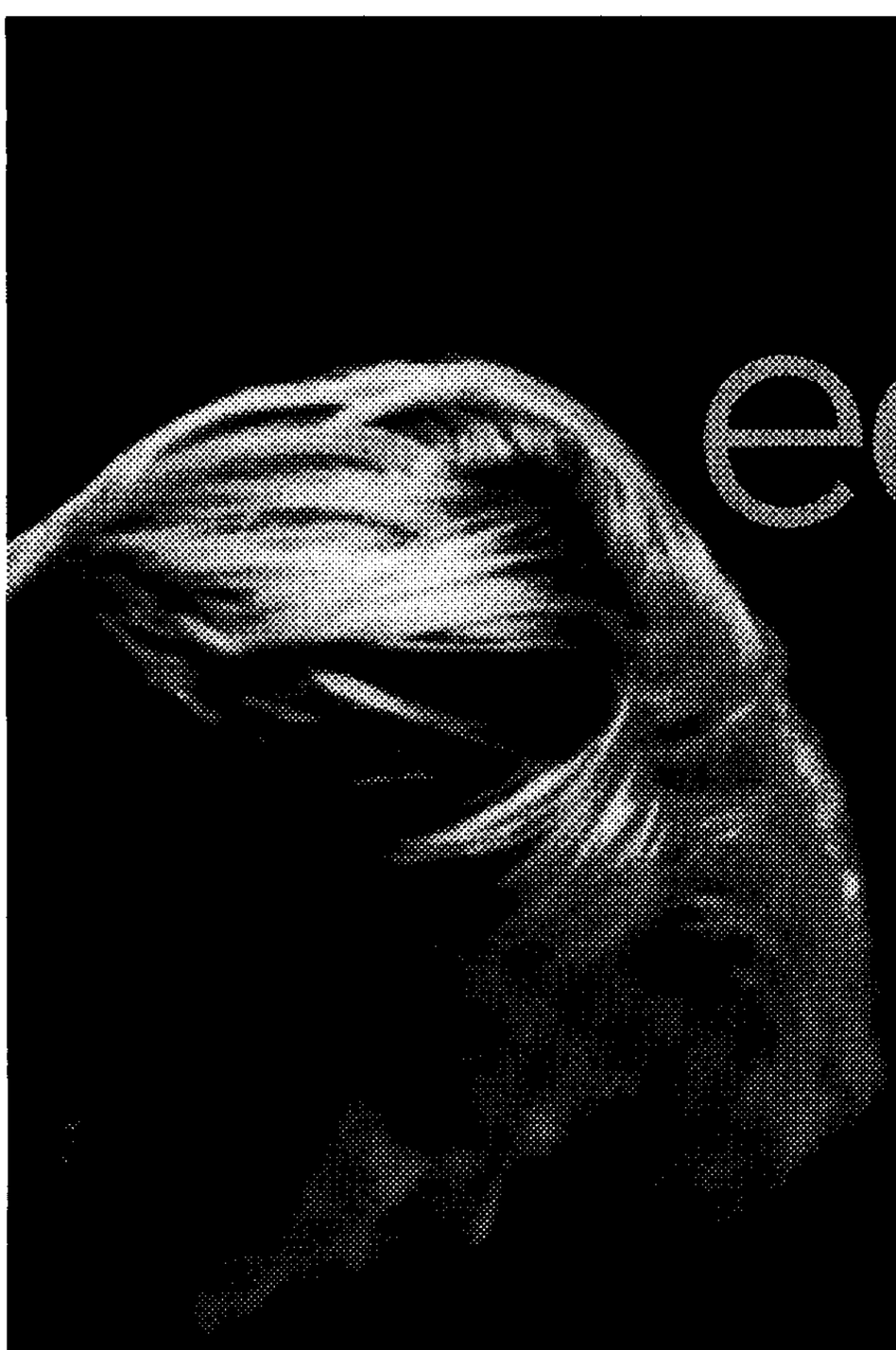

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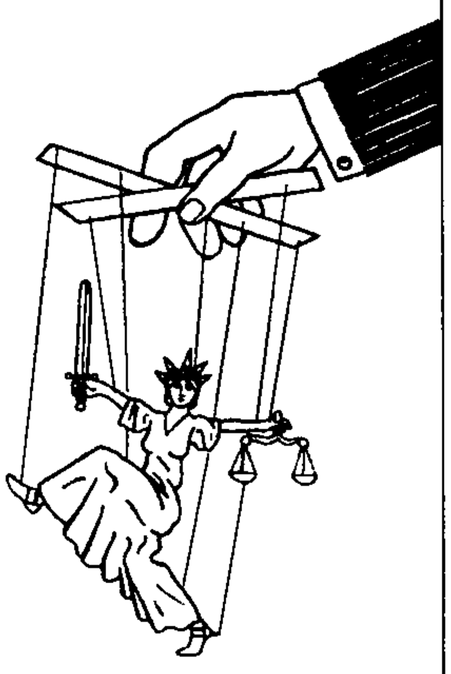

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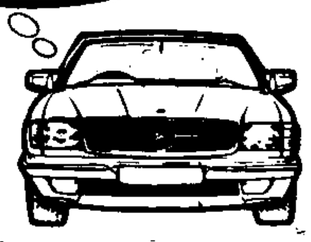

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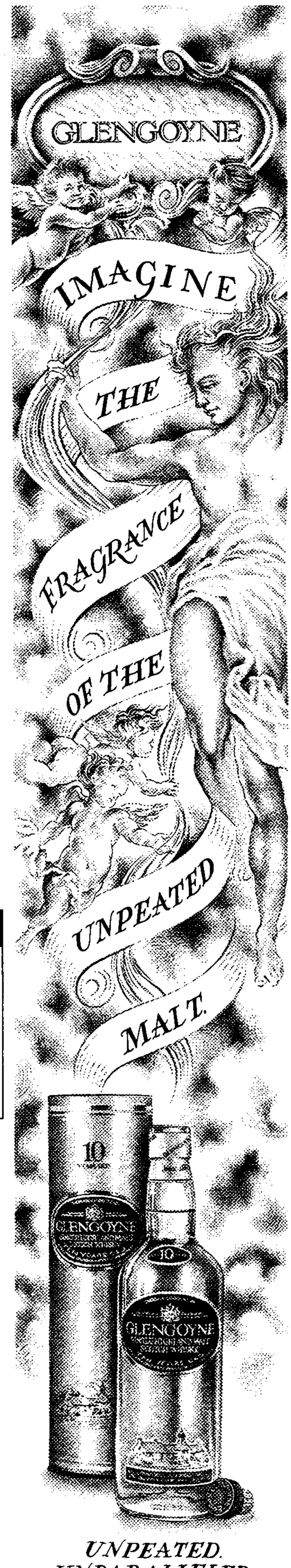

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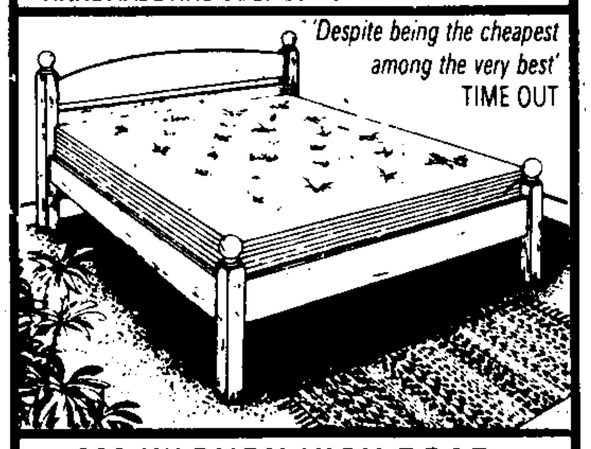

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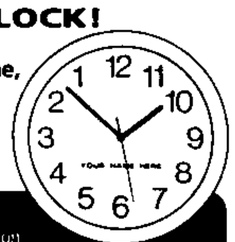

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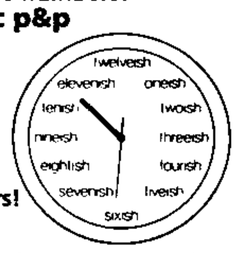

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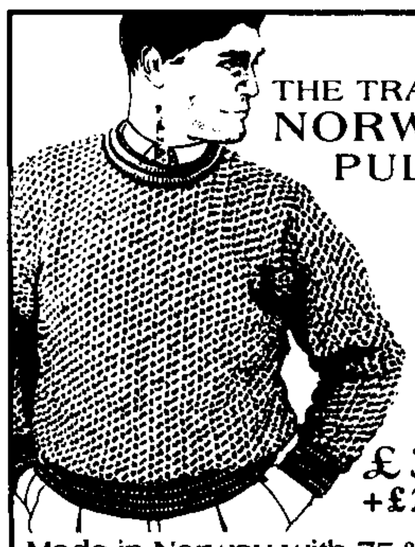

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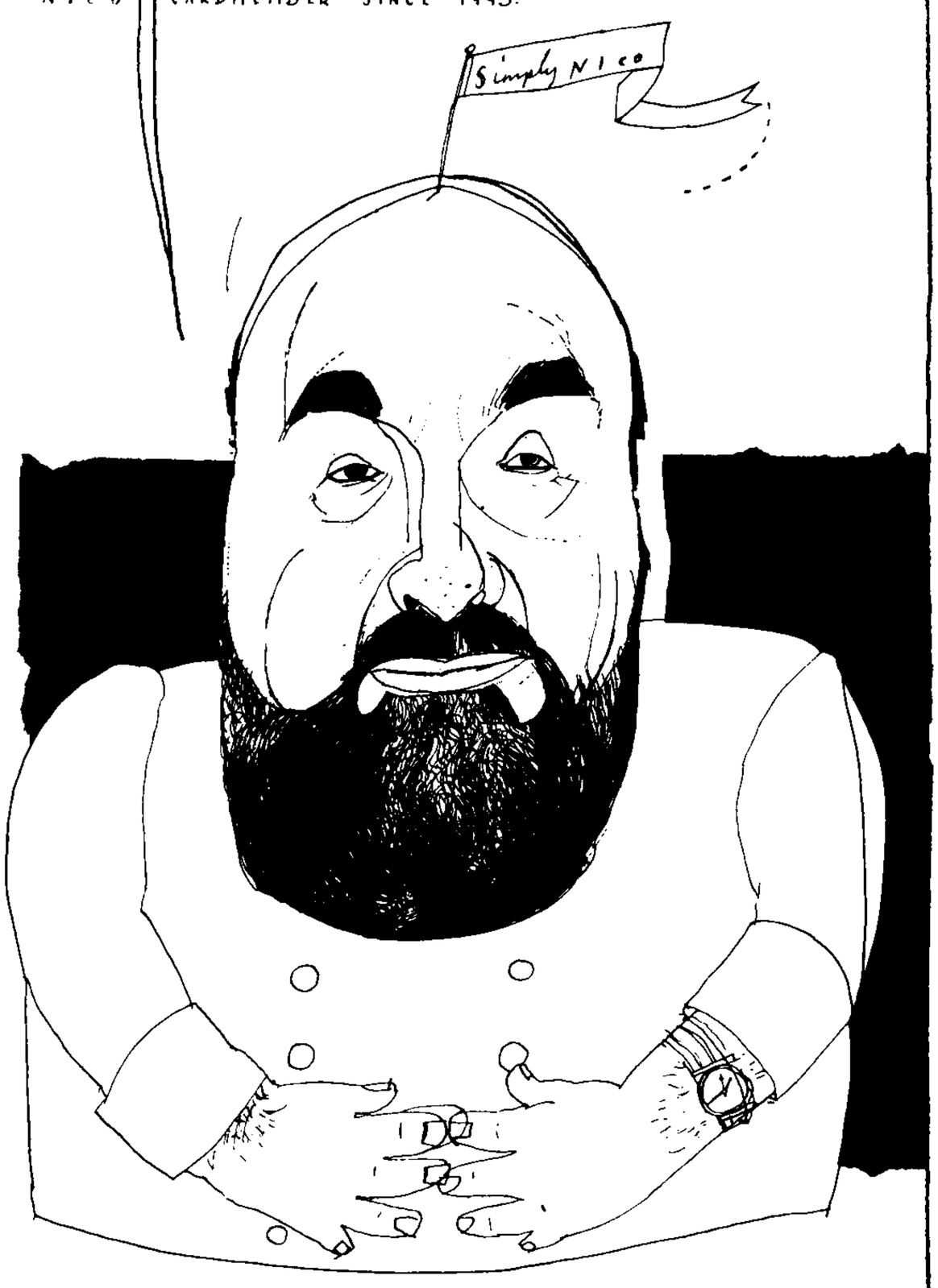

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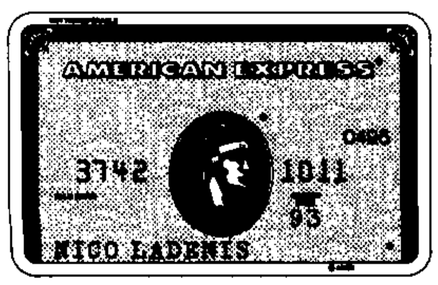

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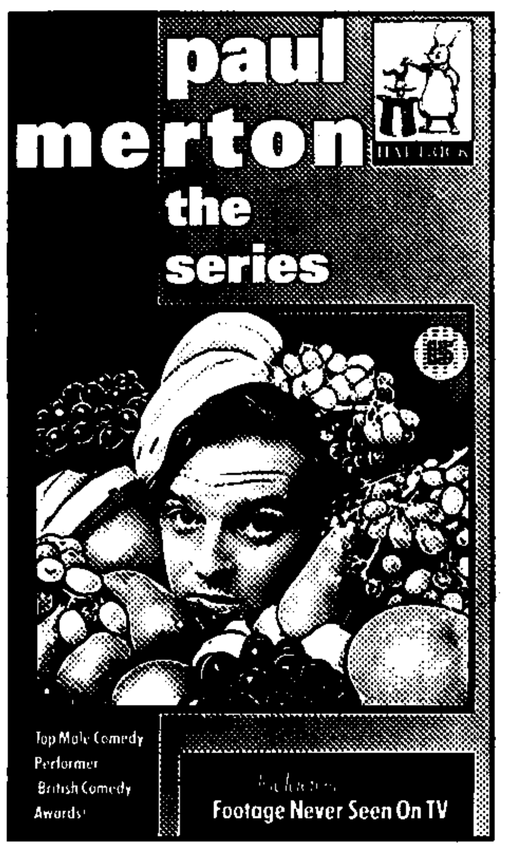

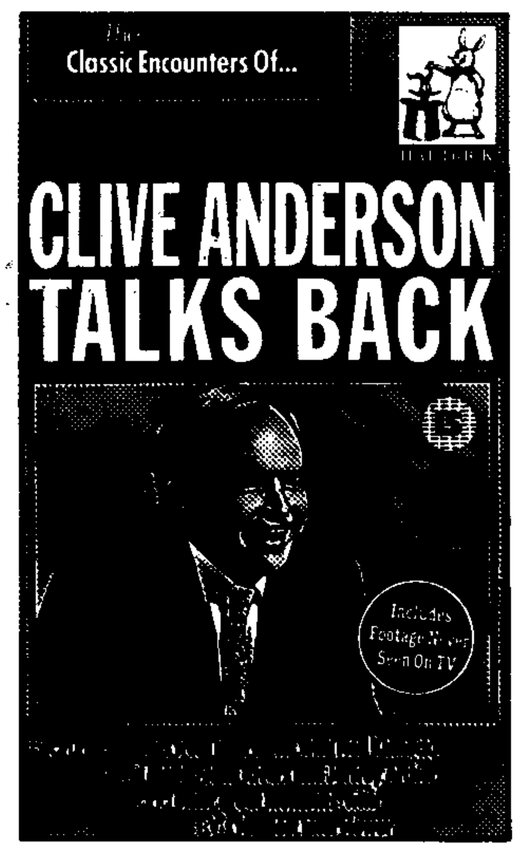

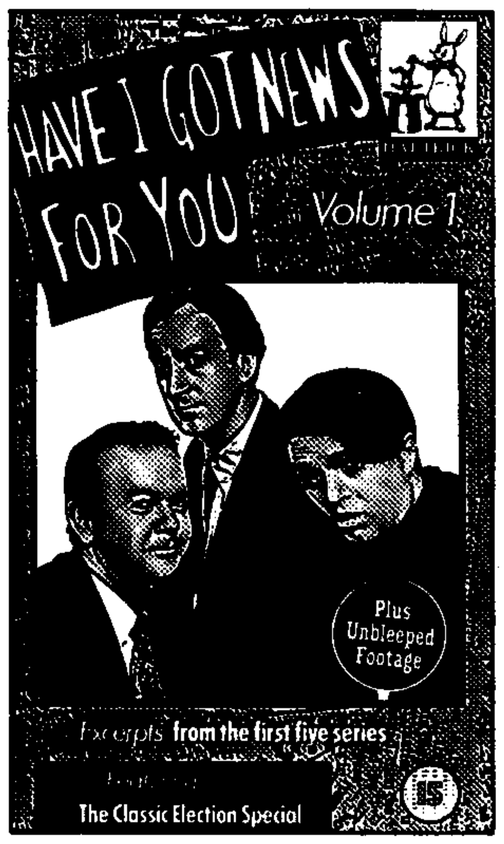
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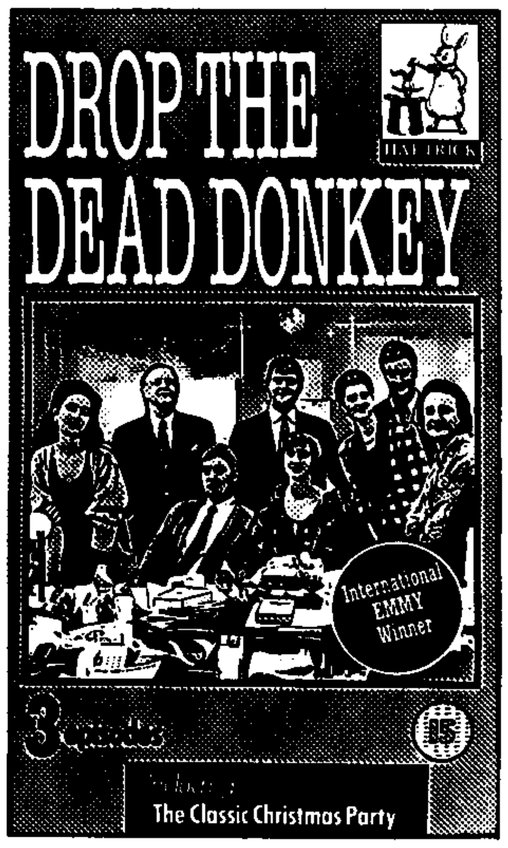

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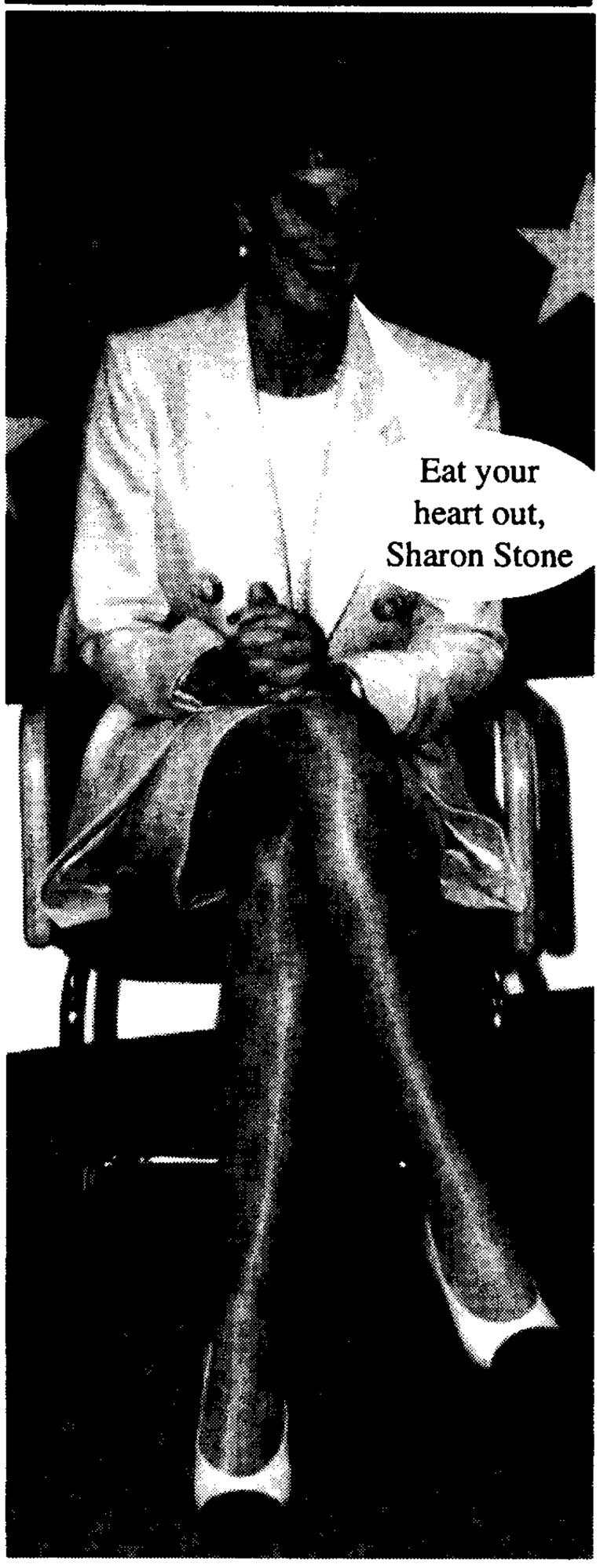

Lord Gnome would like to apologise for the publication of the above picture. It was printed in the sincere belief that it would make him a great deal of money. He deeply regrets that it may have had the opposite effect, and would like to make it clear that after resigning from the Press Complaints Commission five minutes ago he has rejoined it with genuine and renewed commitment until he gets his hands on some more pictures *(shurely shome mishtake? E.S.)*.

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COLOUR SECTION

THE LARGE mouth of George Reade has cost the *Sunday Telegraph* a lot of money.

The heroic former West Midlands police officer walked free from the courts last month after the case against him for fabricating evidence against the Birmingham Six was dismissed because of too much publicity. So delighted was he that he promptly denounced the Birmingham Six as guilty.

The *Sunday Telegraph* triumphantly quoted him, and the resulting libel action (which might have been foreseen even by the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*) resulted, on 14 November, in the most grovelling apology, signposted on page 1 and dictated word for word by the Birmingham Six's lawyers for publication on page 2. It restated the six's innocence and "deeply regretted any impression to the contrary which may have been given".

The apology did not disclose the amount of the damages, believed to total well into six figures and to be one of the largest, if not the largest, out-of-court payment ever made by the poor old *Sunday Telegraph*. The settlement has not been greeted with joy in the legal offices of the *Sun*, which also printed Reade's bold comments, and is soon expected to grovel and shell out even more.

The settlement also came as a shock for the *Sunday Telegraph*'s crime correspondent, Robert Porter, whose sad attempt at self-justification appeared in a letter to the last *Eye*. Another letter of the same ilk came from Peter Rhodes of the *Express and Star* in Wolverhampton.

After staking his claim (which is very tenuous) to have fought for the innocence of the six before they were released (the *Express and Star* was as hostile to their campaign as it has been to the case of the men wrongly convicted of murdering Carl Bridgewater), Mr Rhodes justifies his whitewashing of Frank Skuse, the home office scientist whose explosives-on-the-hands evidence helped convict the Six and Judith Ward. Rhodes writes: "I have to say that Skuse comes across not as a doddering oaf of Birmingham Six folklore but as a very precise and persuasive interviewee".

Rhodes does not "have to say" anything of the kind, but since he does, here is what the court of appeal said about Skuse in its judgment on the Judith Ward case.

"There is before us an impressive body of expert opinion to the effect that Dr Skuse's tests, notwithstanding his confident assertions at the trial, were of no value in establishing contact between the appellant and explosives in 1974... If the trial judge had known what we know he would have excluded Dr Skuse's evidence as valueless. Dr Skuse's conclusion was wrong, and demonstrably wrong judged even by the state of forensic science in 1974."

IT SEEMS that Lord Justice Scott's Iraqgate inquiry has seen all the witnesses from the ministry of defence that it wants to. Scott has seen Ian MacDonald and Alan Barrett, and when he starts up again on 22 November, he will be questioning witnesses from the department of trade.

But wait a moment: whatever happened to Nicholas Bevan, former assistant under secretary at the MoD? He was senior to both MacDonald and Barrett, and was the top official from the ministry to give evidence, twice, to the parliamentary trade and industry "supergun" committee in 1992. No one at the ministry was more responsible for arms exports matters than Mr Bevan. Yet he has now joined the long list of VWINCS (Vital Witnesses Not Called by Scott).

So where is Bevan now? A few weeks after giving "very satisfactory" (for the government) evidence in the Commons, Bevan was promoted to the cabinet office where he became deputy head of the defence and overseas affairs secretariat. His boss there was Pauline Neville-Jones, a spook of tremendous seniority. The formidable partnership of Neville-Jones and Bevan were confronted in November 1992 by the setting up of the Scott inquiry. For them the immediate danger was that their boss, John Major, who was chancellor of the exchequer when Iraq invaded Kuwait, might be held responsible for some of the nastier arms sales to Saddam.

The pair explored this ghastly possibility with the greatest possible care and concluded that Major was entirely blameless (they were not so sure about his predecessor, but that's another matter). The prime minister was extremely grateful. He at once recommended Bevan for the important job of advising the House of Commons speaker on what to allow on the floor of the chamber. Ever since, Mr Bevan has been assiduously ensuring that matters relating to arms for Iraq are left to the Scott inquiry... and not debated irresponsibly in the mother of parliaments.

Pauline Neville-Jones has gone even higher. She is now head of the joint intelligence committee, which decides pretty well everything, including which intelligence documents are released to Scott.

PS: Neville-Jones started her life as "third secretary" at the British embassy at Salisbury, Rhodesia, at the time of UDI (1965). Perhaps she crossed paths with Stephan Adolphus Kock, the military adviser to the governor of Rhodesia, who was also described in the Bingham report (1978) as the national accounts adviser to BP Rhodesia.

Kock, who became an adviser on arms sales to the Midland Bank, knows even more about Iraqgate than Neville-Jones. He gave evidence to the supergun committee... and is expected to be another VWINC (Vital Witness Not Called by Scott).

PRINCESS HAS GOOD CHANCE OF VICTORY, CARTER-RUCK SAYS was the headline atop the lead story on page 2 of last Tuesday's *Times*. But quite why the views of this superannuated libel lawyer should be thought so newsworthy is a mystery.

Nor did the article explain why Princess Di's action against the *Mirror* was any likelier to succeed than Fergie's failed attempt last year to injunct the photos of herself and Johnny Bryan.

Still, Carter-Fuck may be right in arguing that the princess had a good chance of victory. For, unlike Fergie, she is not using the services of Mr Peter Carter-Fuck.

SIGNING SESSION

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Street of Shame

LAST Tuesday afternoon, as the brouhaha about Princess Di swirled round the *Mirror* building, another crisis hit the wretched paper, unnoticed by the outside world.

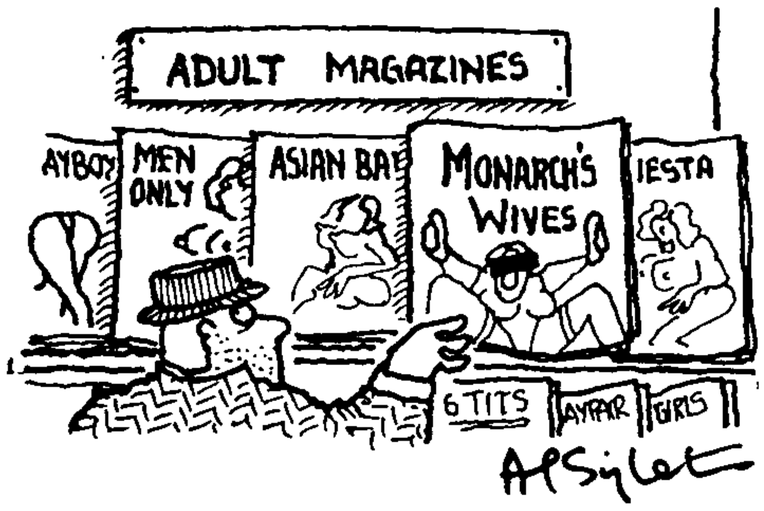
The next morning's *Mirror* was due to unveil its latest stunt: a competition to win private health insurance for a year. The well-known socialist advertising agency, Saatchi & Saatchi, had booked prime-time slots in Tuesday night's ITV schedules for commercials plugging the promotion. All was ready to go — until a *Mirror* hack, who had not previously heard of the wheeze, asked whether it didn't rather contradict the paper's long and loud support for the NHS.

Such was the political sophistication of the executives who had cooked up the scheme — David "Rommel" Montgomery, promotions boss Andrew Gephardt, *Mirror* editor David "Dumbo" Banks — that the thought had apparently not occurred to them. But now they belatedly twigged that, with the paper already enduring fusillades of bad publicity, this would give yet more ammunition to their rivals. Saatchi & Saatchi was ordered to pull the TV commercials, and all mentions of the competition were hastily excised from the next day's paper.

But Montgomery was determined not to drop the idea altogether. And so this Monday, once the Diana fuss had died down, the *Mirror* quietly introduced its tasteless sales gimmick: "To apply for one of these 50,000 free one-year health insurance policies, all you need do is collect FOUR separately numbered tokens and a voucher, to be published during this week."

The accompanying article, wisely unsigned, offered a lame defence of the paper's political inconsistency. "Health insurance will never replace the NHS, and we at the *Mirror* would never want it to," it bleated. "Nevertheless..."

Nevertheless indeed. For the new regime at the *Mirror* does not share the paper's traditional attachment to public services. David Banks, having boasted when he became editor that his children were being educated at a state school in Gospel Oak, has now quietly transferred them to Channings, a private establishment in Highgate. Meanwhile, "Rommel" himself amazed his companions at a recent lunch with Virginia Bottomley by the vehemence of his support for Tory health policies. When another guest, Dr Tom Stuttaford, ventured some mild criticism of la Bottomley's plans, "Rommel" turned on him and denounced him as a "left-winger" — no mean accolade, since Stuttaford is in fact a former Tory MP.



ONE OF THE very few true statements published in the *Daily Mirror* about the pictures fiasco — that the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Lord McGregor of Durris, is a buffoon — was instantly withdrawn.

But someone ought to complain to the PCC about the astonishingly smooth ride given by the media to the irascible chairman.

McGregor was ennobled by the last Labour government, but his weakness is aristocracy, and especially royalty, whom he adores. The strongest influence in his life is Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, for 40 years a lady in waiting to Princess Margaret, who worked with him for 10 years at the Advertising Standards Authority and moved with him to the PCC (along with many others).

Any humiliation of royalty sends McGregor into paroxysms of righteous indignation, which explains his two recent outbursts in which he ignored his colleagues, his regulations and procedures by flouncing into the media and spouting his rage.

THE sound of *Sunset Times* editor Andrew Neill taking the moral high ground while attacking the *Mirror* for its Diana photos stretched credulity to breaking point — even in the supine Murdoch stable.

When Neill was interviewed by fellow Murdoch lackey Selina Scott on Sky TV, he droned on and on about the *Mirror*'s "appalling behaviour". Eventually Scott grew tired of toadying and raised the point that Neill himself had sold thousands of extra copies of his own organ by publishing extracts from Andrew Morton's bulimia book.

That was different, said Neil, because Di had cooperated and there was no intrusion into her privacy. Bravely, Scott pressed on: what about the intrusion into Charles's privacy?

Neill, the searcher for truth, then hit the roof, threatened to end the interview and nearly walked out. Scott hastily concluded and moved on. But at Sky's Westminster studio the tapes kept on rolling — long enough to record Brillo Pad releasing a stream of off-air invective about la Scott and vowing revenge.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

ASSOCIATED Newspapers chairman Sir David English has emerged as an unlikely champion of Mirror Group chief executive David "Rommel" Montgomery.

In a recent *Spectator* diary, English congratulated the *Daily Mirror* for scooping everyone with the leaked extracts of the Thatch memoirs and suggested that Mirror Group had turned a corner.

Since then, in the aftermath of the *Sunday Mirror*'s publication of the Diana photos, Fester persuaded "Rommel" to apologise to the Press Complaints Commission and rejoin it. Sir David has the best interests of the press at heart. But let us hope that his daughter Nikki, a junior photographer at the *Daily Mirror*, gets some plum assignments in the near future.

THE *Daily Mail* — "the paper that really knows the royals" — in fact knows bugger all about them and, like the other tabloids, has to make it all up.

Hence its dotty coverage of Princess Diana's health earlier this month.

On a Tuesday, a worried Richard Kay wrote that Diana had "a history of migraines which, in most people, are stress-related". By the very next day she had done an Ernest Saunders — made a miracle recovery — when the *Mail* reported with its usual sham authority that "she has never been known to suffer a migraine in her life".

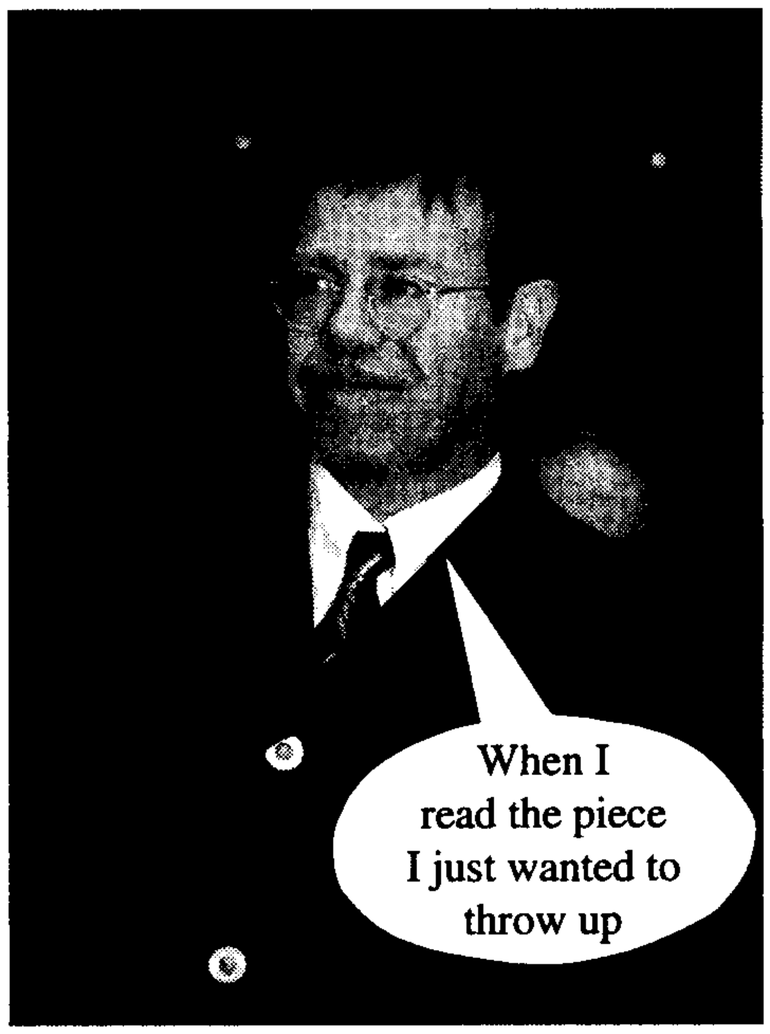
THE *Independent*'s plea earlier this year that "something must be done" about the siege of Sarajevo was not all it appeared.

Claiming its campaign touched a public nerve, the *Indy* filled its front page with the names of readers who supported the campaign to save Sarajevo, and it looked very impressive.

However, it transpires that anyone who wrote to the paper on the subject of Bosnia was counted as a supporter — even when they disagreed strongly with the Whittam-Smith line.

Indy reader S. Ognjanovich wrote to criticise the Save Sarajevo campaign, only to see his name among the supporters. After complaining to the Press Complaints Commission, the *Indy* published

ELTON LIBEL LATEST



a small correction. But how many other "supporters" were not, in fact, supporters? And does anyone at the holier-than-thou paper care?

THE PRESS may not have emerged in good odour from the Princess Di saga — but nor have some members of the legal profession.

One lawyer looking particularly silly at the moment is the princess's solicitor, Anthony Julius of Mishcon DeReya, who in the space of two days last week presided over the following cock-ups:

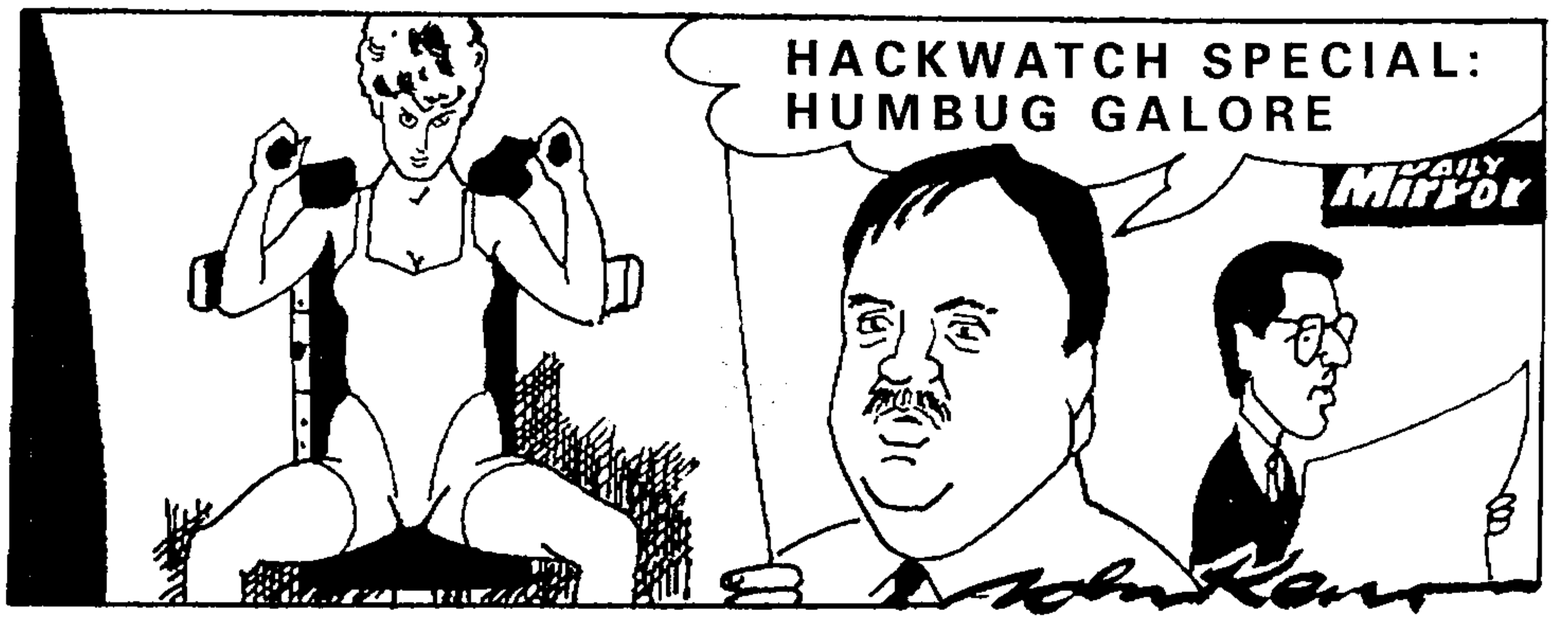
- He got an order, on behalf of Diana, against Mirror Group Newspapers plc — which is the name of the holding company but not the company that actually publishes the *Mirror*. (Interestingly, Mishcon DeReya often acts for *Mirror* newspapers. It therefore seems rather surprising that nobody at the firm has yet learnt the company's name.)
- He issued writs against Mirror Group Newspapers Ltd, a non-existent entity, when what he should have done was sue MGN Ltd.
- One of his orders was missing a crucial page, ending in mid-sentence. Another claimed that a representative of gym manager Bryce Taylor had been in court. Not so.
- Julius also neglected to take the normal precaution of putting penal notices on the orders he served on Taylor, which means the princess cannot bring contempt of court proceedings if Taylor chooses to disobey the orders.
- He served an order on Bryce Taylor requiring "the plaintiff" to reveal all information relating to the proceeds from the sale of the photos.

As even a first-year law student could have explained to Julius, the plaintiff in the case is none other than his own client, the Princess of Wales.

THE *News of the Screws* launched a moral attack on solicitor Mark Stephens for declaring on LBC that by suing over the "sneak gym pics" Diana was "on very thin ice legally" — yet at the same time failing to point out that he, Stephens, is solicitor for Rex Features, the agency handling worldwide sales of the pictures.

Perhaps the *Screws* hack who wrote the story had forgotten that his own paper has bought pictures from Rex Features in the past, in particular when it paid £25,000 to Rex Features for the story and photographs of Sonia Sutcliffe's "Ripper lookalike" Greek boyfriend, George Papoutsis.

Indeed, the *Screws* joined Rex Features as co-defendants in the libel action brought by Sutcliffe. The Papoutsis story turned out to be a concoction of hackette Barbara Jones and photographer Ian Parry, but it was the *Screws* — not a Mirror title — that went ahead and published it.



WORLD EXCLUSIVE: DI SPY SENSATION screamed the *Sunday Mirror*'s headline on 7 November, beside a photo of the Princess of Wales in a leotard. The "stunning picture" would, the paper predicted, "spark a royal security storm".

As if aware that this attempt at a public-interest justification was pretty flimsy, an article inside proposed a different reason for publishing the photos: "The secret pictures make a nonsense of last week's claims that Diana was a physical wreck after a recurrence of her bulimia." This line, too, collapsed at once, as it turned out that the pictures were taken last May.

The following morning, while the *Daily Mirror* printed more photos and produced yet another excuse for its conduct ("We Love Di: That's Why the *Daily Mirror* is Using This Picture"), rival tabloids worked themselves into a fever of moral outrage. The *Daily Star* accused the *Mirror* of "hypocrisy and dishonourable conduct... the act of a squalid peeping tom". The *Star* certainly knows a thing or two about hypocrisy and dishonourable conduct: 11 years ago it filled its front page with a peeping-tom photo of Princess Di, then five months pregnant, wearing a skimpy bikini while on holiday in the Bahamas.

The *Sun* was even more indignant. "A peeping Tom is the lowest of the low," it raged. "Spying on someone's private moments is like stealing their soul. We all need time which is ours and ours alone. Even someone who revels in the public gaze as much as Princess Diana has the right to privacy at those times when her actions have no bearing on her royal duties. That is why the *Sun* condemns Diana's disgusting treatment at the hands of the Mirror newspaper group... What the Mirror group has done to Diana is immoral, unfeeling and unforgivable... This was Diana relaxing alone, doing harm to no one, in a private world that should have remained that way. Almost as bad the guttersnipe morality of this sickening scoop is the downright stupidity of it." The *Sun*, we were told, "would never ever have published pictures taken in such an underhand way."

Perhaps *Sun* editor Kelvin Mackenzie has forgotten that in 1982 he, too, splashed photos of pregnant, bikini-clad Di on his front page. When the Queen's press secretary protested at this intrusion into the princess's privacy, Kelvin replied with a front-page editorial (19 February 1982), justifying the guttersnipe morality of this sickening scoop:

"The pictures were carefree, innocent and delightful," he insisted. "All the Royal Family live in the constant glare of publicity, and the *Sun* respects their right, like everyone else, to moments of private intimacy. But we always have to balance this with our readers' legitimate interest in the Royal Family, not merely as symbols but as living, breathing people. In all honesty, we see nothing wrong with pictures that could have been any young, happy couple... We *are* sorry the palace did not like our pictures. But we still think Princess Di looks terrific."

Kelvin has also, apparently, forgotten certain other moments from his paper's glorious history. In October 1988 the *Sun* published a private photograph of the Queen, the Queen Mum and Fergie which had been stolen from Buckingham Palace: after being sued by Brenda, the paper was forced to apologise and pay £100,000 in damages.

More recently, in August 1990, the *Sun* filled its front page with a blurred picture, taken with a telephoto lens from 1,000 yards away, of Prince Charles holding "old flame Lady Penny Romsey in a lingering, warm embrace at a hideaway villa in Majorca". The nudge-nudge innuendo of the headline ("Prince Shares Tender Moments with Lovely Penny Beside a Pool") was exploded the following day when it emerged that, seconds before the picture was taken, Lady Romsey had told Charles that her four-year-old daughter was dying of cancer. The Press Council censured the *Sun* for "a gross invasion of privacy". More recently still, it was the *Sun* which published the sneakily-obtained Squidgy tapes.

Meanwhile, Monday's *Daily Mirror* accused its rivals of "pious hypocrisy". Mirror Group Newspapers, it boasted in a full-page editorial, "published what we believe our readers want to see and have a right to know... We published the 'Camillagate' and 'Squidgy' tapes which told much of the true story of the marriage break-up of the heir to the throne."

The Camillagate tape was indeed published by Mirror Group rags — the *People* and the *Sunday Mirror* — but it is surprising to see *Daily Mirror* editor David Banks crowing about it. He must assume that no one noticed an interview he gave in April this year to *The Journalist's Handbook*, in which he was asked why he hadn't published Camillagate.

"Not justifiable," he replied. "It didn't satisfy the public interest, it wasn't in the public interest. It was a kind of prurient self-interest... a circulation-building feat." The interviewer went on to ask where an editor should draw the line in cases where a public figure's privacy is invaded. "I must admit I am unhappy about electronic surveillance," Banks said. "My instinctive reaction is that it isn't the sort of thing that decent, honest people do."

By last Tuesday, *News of the Screws* editor Patsy Chapman had entered the fray, accusing the *Mirror* of being "arrogant" and "petulant" in pulling out of the Press Complaints Commission. "It is madness," she told the *Sun*. "The PCC is a joint effort for us all to keep the freedom of the press. They have to reconsider or it will leave the self-regulation argument badly wounded."

Clearly this cannot be the same Patsy Chapman who — in a fine display of petulance and arrogance — publicly threatened to resign from the PCC last year if it dared to criticise newspaper coverage of the David Mellor legover saga.

Her support for the PCC's attempts at self-regulation also sounds rather odd coming from a woman who, during her reign at the *Screws*, has broken the PCC's rules with reckless regularity — running a smear story about the personal life of Clare Short MP, paying money to convicted criminals, "buying up" the girlfriend of a policeman's murderer, etc etc.

Last year Patsy was all set to print "intimate photographs" of Princess Di and Life Guards officer Major James Hewitt (the story was even trailed in the previous day's *Sun*); publication was halted only after the personal intervention of News International boss Andrew Knight. In such circumstances, it is not easy to credit la Chapman's holier-than-thou claim that, although she knew of the latest Di pictures in advance, "we wouldn't have touched them with a bargepole".

Last Wednesday, the demented tabloid dog-fight came to a sudden halt. Sir David English and Rupert Murdoch, deciding it was doing nobody any good, persuaded the *Mirror* and the PCC to kiss and make up, with copious apologies all round. But the *Mirror* couldn't resist one last swipe.

"For days an abusive campaign has been waged against the *Daily Mirror* and our sister titles," it announced. "Despite the provocation and the sanctimonious statements from rivals who conveniently forgot their own past misdeeds, the *Mirror* has refused to retaliate in kind. *We will not indulge in these self-denigrating wars that must leave readers baffled.*"

Er, of course not. Clearly the *Mirror* editorial two days earlier, which attacked the "appalling" *Sun* and *News of the World* for "making up stories when it suits them and never willingly saying sorry", was not intended to denigrate them. Nor was Tuesday's denunciation of "our rivals who live in the gutter", who were described as "the shabbiest, tawdriest collection of po-faced hypocrites".

Is it any wonder if readers are baffled? To add to the confusion, in its 7 November issue the *Sunday Mirror* boasted that "more revelations" about Princess Di and the gym would appear "in next week's *Sunday Mirror*".

Come last Sunday, however, there was merely a pisspoor, shamefaced editorial, with no revelations at all. Having promised its readers hot sticky toffee, the paper force-fed them humbug instead. Perhaps a case could be brought under the trades descriptions act.

GULF NEWS

WHILE Prince Charles got red carpet treatment on his recent visit to Kuwait, his host, the ruling Al-Sabah family, is rather less friendly to just about everyone else.

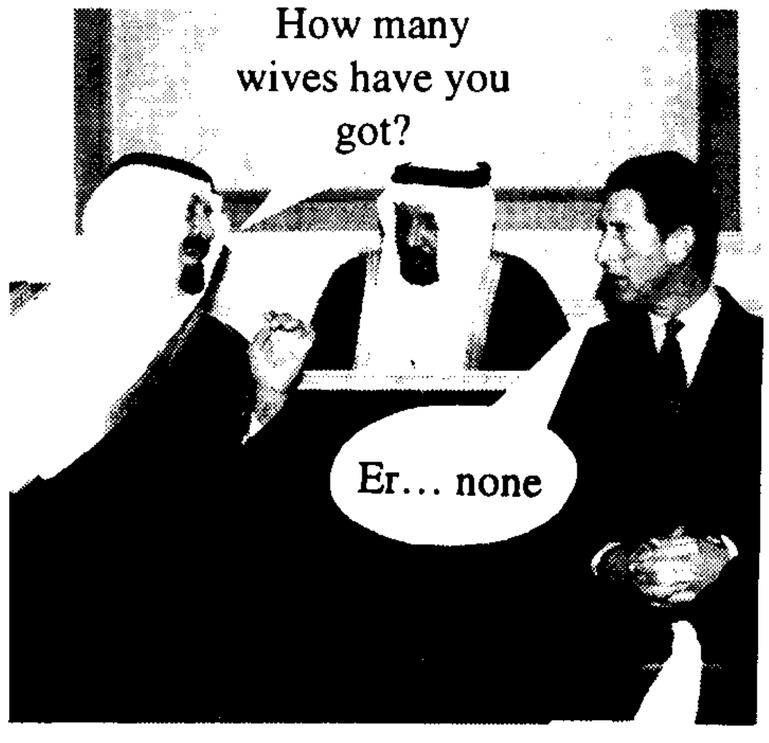
Since the liberation of Kuwait, the Al-Sabahs, who for the most part spent the Gulf war in London, Paris and other frontline postings, have encouraged a campaign of harassment against those thought to have collaborated with the Iraqis.

Virtually the entire Palestinian population of around 60,000 fled, often for a life of poverty as refugees in Jordan. The definition of a Palestinian is of course loose: even those born and bred in Kuwait were forced out. But to be fair, Palestinians are not the only group discriminated against.

Of Kuwait's estimated native population of 650,000, only 92,000 are allowed to elect members of the largely ceremonial national assembly. Despite promises of reform, the Al-Sabahs have clamped down on any hint of democracy. Only men aged 21 or over who can prove Kuwaiti ancestry back to 1920 are granted first class citizenship and can vote.

The Al-Sabahs are also trying to find a way to exclude from the register children born to Kuwaiti women who were raped by Iraqi soldiers. Around 300 are being cared for in orphanages while consideration is given to granting them "third class" citizenship.

The British government has been remarkably silent about this new apartheid. And little has been heard from the Friends of Kuwait, a lavishly funded lobby group which spent the war issuing press releases from its Porchester Terrace HQ explaining how Kuwait was a bastion of decency and tolerance.



THE REAL issue in the budget is the personal pride of the chancellor, Kenneth Clarke.

He is needled by constant sniping from his predecessor, Norman Lamont, who insists the economy was in perfectly good shape last spring and that there was no need to change chancellors.

Clarke replies testily that Lamont left him "with a hell of a mess". The evidence of the "mess", he says, is the "huge deficit" on the balance of payments account, which he says must be slashed. Hence his determination to increase taxes.

Clarke's tax-raising zeal is enthusiastically backed by the slow-witted governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, a crusted "balancer of the books" of the old guard, who is supported in turn by his upper class twit deputy, Rupert Pennant-Rea.

Both men have to contend with the rather more sophisticated views of the bank's main economic adviser, Prof Mervyn King, whose recent speech to the European Economic Association, of which he is president, emphasised the seriousness of "debt deflation" in Britain (too much debt, so too little consumer spending).

King favours interest rate cuts and no tax increases. George's jealousy of his adviser is said to be associated with the fact that King is 10 years younger and got a first at Cambridge, which George didn't.

MORALE is plunging even lower in Great Palumbo Street as the Arts Council approaches extinction in its present form and reincarnation on 1 April 1994 as a Little England quango based in the "regions".

Heritage secretary Peter Brooke has had his resolve to go for the jugular stiffened by the arrival in his ministry of crazed ultra-rightist Ian "Deep" Sproat. In accordance with ministerial rules on dealing with "lippy" officials, Brooke has made it known the government will veto any proposal by the new English body to keep on the council's secretary-general, Anthony Everitt.

But there is even greater alarm at the news that the heritage ministry favours replacing both chairman and secretary — Tory millionaire property development guru, Peter Palumbo, and life-long arts bureaucrat Everitt — with one salaried part-time executive chairman.

Even worse, Downing Street and Conservative central office are reportedly pressing for the job to be given to another Tory millionaire, Peter "PR" Gummer, the brother of environment secretary John "Shitbag" Gummer. The only snag is whether P. Gummer can be persuaded it would be good for his long-term image to take on a job requiring such high profile failure.

Meanwhile, the game plan for the Arts Council is to run it down and wind it up. Its few remaining jobs, deciding how much, if any, money to give to the national companies, would be taken over by Ian Stoat and his entourage of fanatical, ex-treasury No Turning Back Group civil servants who are crawling over the heritage department's lavish new HQ — about the only growth area in the arts.

WITH the passage of the loony privatisation bill, rail users have lost a battle but have not yet lost the war.

The national rail network is still intact, and thanks to Labour's warning that subsidies will be reviewed as soon as the Tories are out of office, there will be no great rush of applications for franchises.

One healthy sign of BR's regained composure is the reappearance of full-page ads for InterCity, which is supposed to be folded up. At BR itself, where chief executive "Admiral" John Welsby, an ex-civil servant, has fought tirelessly against his former colleagues in Whitehall, the atmosphere is reminiscent of wartime France, though there are far fewer collaborators.

"Single mum's the word"

The Laval role is filled, of course, by BR vice-chairman Robert Gillette de Horton, who is also chairman of Railtrack where he is as much loved as he was at BP. Almost everyone else is either waiting for the liberation or has no wish to be shot if it happens.

One person who does not stand to benefit from it is ambitious under secretary Philip Wood, who shares with Michael Portillo the dubious distinction of concocting what has now become the 1993 railways act. Unlike Portillo, Wood is having to live with it. (His next assignment as an adviser to Yeltsin on privatisation of the trans-Siberian railway has been postponed.)

Wood has not pleased his present masters by speaking his mind on the future of railfreight at what he thought was a private meeting: if, as data at the meeting showed, railfreight virtually disappears under privatisation, so be it, Wood implied. Has he forgotten that ministers are still kidding themselves (as well as the public) that railfreight will double or even treble when market forces are let loose on it?

EVERYBODY is baffled by defence secretary Malcolm Rifkind's appointment of David Hart as a special defence adviser.

Hart, it will be recalled, is the Thatcherite ex-property developer who became a PR person and helped crush the 1984 miners' strike.

He has always seen eye to eye with Michael Portillo, who is a regular weekend visitor at Hart's Suffolk mansion. Surely this is not the best background for resisting the defence cost-cutting that Kenneth Clarke and Portillo have so vigorously embarked on?

A TASTY scrap is about to take place in the Black Country where, to the detriment of Labour, the two Warley constituencies, east and west, are to be merged by the boundary commissioners before the next general election.

Both seats are held by high-profile Labour members: John Spellar, the one-time electricians' union fixer, in the west; and colourful thespian Andrew Faulds, a one-line Roman centurion in the film *Cleopatra*, in the east. At least one of these socialist stalwarts will lose his place at the forthcoming OMOV-style selection meeting.

The odds are on Faulds becoming the fall guy. Spellar's "researcher", ex-headmaster Bill Thomas, is not only chairman of the local Brandhall Labour Club, but also national treasurer of the Association of Labour Clubs. By an amazing coincidence, Brandhall Labour Club recently submitted 52 new membership applications to Warley Labour party.

Membership officers are waiting to see whether one cheque is sent to cover the 52 new memberships, and they have asked the party's HQ in Walworth Road to investigate this sudden outbreak of mass socialism.

'Backbiter'

JOBS FOR THE BOYS

FIFE enterprise board's annual report shows the company's nine besuited directors smiling and bantering about their fortunate lot. As well they might...

Mr C.W. Pagan MBE, for instance, a member of the board, is also a partner in the firm Pagan Osborne Grace and Calders. It supplied legal services to Fife enterprise board to the tune of £14,501.

Then there's Mr T.M. McGregor, a Fife director until last February, by which time his engineering firm had contributed "consultancy" services of £15,265.

Meanwhile, against a "background of substantial economic uncertainty", Fife was still able to loan the Rippin Group Ltd £100,000 as part of a "financial restructuring of the company". Mr R.A. Rippin, director of the Rippin group, is also a member of the, er, Fife enterprise board, as are Mr D.B.B. Smith, chief executive of Dunfermline Building Society (which acquired a nifty £350,000 slot of prime real estate from Fife) and Mr A.K. Smith (no relation), md of Babcock Thorn Ltd (£455,000 worth of youth training).

The men declared their interests on each occasion, of course, but there's nothing like keeping it in the family, is there boys?

THE ROAD LOBBY (4)

THE British Roads Federation, aka the road lobby, takes pride in its library of transport data even though much of the information it gives out overlooks basic facts or is simply wrong.

The BRF's oft-repeated whinge that "road-user taxation exceeds road expenditure by more than three to one" falls into the latter category. The BRF says that total road expenditure is £5.5 billion a year (91/92); but it also says that the total cost of road accidents is £6.1 billion (91) — more *in itself* than the total the BRF attributes to road users.

The BRF also conveniently overlooks the other "costs" (such as pollution and company car perks) which mean that car and lorry owners are *subsidised* to the tune of about £6 billion a year.

The reality the treasury has still to grasp is that in many cases public transport needs *less* subsidy per person than roads. Most car users would now agree there should be a proper balance between investment in roads and public transport. And yet nearly all motorists are having to fund the all-out push for more roads while public transport is starved to death. The membership of the BRF (as at 31 December 1992) includes: the Automobile Association, the Royal Automobile Club and the Royal Scottish Automobile Club.

FACT: Nearly a quarter of the posts on the BRF's board of directors, including both vice-chairmanships, are held by top brass from the AA and RAC.

JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
A LILLEY-LIVERED PROPOSAL!
CUTTING BENEFITS TO LONE PARENTS WILL CUT THE NUMBER OF LITTLE BASTARDS ...WHO GO INTO CRIME!
SNIP!
SNIP!
LIKE YOU!

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE barbarians are at the gates — and have been for some time. During the terrible 900-day German siege of Leningrad, the Hermitage was shelled and bombed and, after the second world war, it was lovingly restored. But now it faces a threat almost as terrible as Hitler: *britische Architekten.*

Since the collapse of communism, western developers and their pliant architects have flocked, like vultures, to Prague, Budapest and St Petersburg, where the poor denizens lack the means or the will to resist the crude blandishments of capitalism. So the Hermitage, most beautiful and wonderful of palace museums, is to be "modernised".

Louvre-style "interventions" in Palace Square are proposed while part of the old general staff building by Rossi is to be gutted by our own Robert Matthew, Johnson Marshall & Partners. Nothing wrong with foreigners: so were Rastrelli and Rossi. But why "Rum Jum"? Because UNESCO, that dubious world-quango from which Britain and the United States withdrew, favours them after they designed a UNESCO-funded archaeological museum for Colonel Gadaffi in Tripoli. God help Russia!

I mention this because the barbarians are not only on the Neva; they are also by the Cherwell, poised to desecrate the Ashmolean Museum.

The buildings housing the Oxford University Galleries and the Taylorean Institute were completed in 1845. A competition held in 1839 had been won by Professor C.R. Cockerell, that most distinguished archaeologist and one of the most elegant, refined and truly original Classical architects of any age. More sophisticated than Wren, Cockerell combined Antique and Renaissance elements in compositions of an intellectual and sculptural brilliance which our modern pygmy photocopy-classicists like Quinlan Terry cannot aspire to. The Victorian, James Fergusson, wrote of the Ashmolean that "there is perhaps no building in England on which the refined student of architecture can dwell with so much pleasure", while the late Sir John Summerson considered that "for sheer wit and invention in the handling of Mannerist themes there is no building in Britain quite like [it]".

I bang on like this to make the point that we are dealing here with a rather serious piece of architecture. Yet, while the outside of the building remains glorious, over the years it has been crudely tinkered with internally. As an anonymous donor affects to wish to help the Ashmolean, perhaps — if the director, Christopher White, had any sense and didn't hate architecture — now is the time to prepare a sensible masterplan and attempt conscientiously to restore the integrity of the best interiors as has been done at the art galleries in Manchester, Edinburgh and even in Trafalgar Square.

But no. Our donor wishes to leave his mark, and he knows about the Louvre pyramid. So the first proposal made by his architects, the modish exhibition designers Stanton Williams, was to dig up the forecourt and have the public entering at basement level. There was absolutely no purpose in this, except as a gimmick to exalt the retail and refreshment space that so obsesses modern museum directors.

In Paris, the glass pyramid attempts to provide one clear entrance instead of the several scattered around the great court. At the Ashmolean, there is already but one unambiguous, unmistakable way in: a splendid tetrastyle Ionic portico, bang in the middle — where else? Fortunately, this ridiculous scheme was rejected.

But our donor does not give in so easily when he thinks the Ashmolean needs to be brought kicking and screaming into the 1970s. A new scheme is in for planning permission. Stanton Williams are now going to alter the steps from Beaumont Street — for the disabled — and oblige us to enter by the door in the south wing, straight into the shop. And what of Cockerell's portico? This will be closed: staff entrance only.

Much of Stanton Williams's scheme — prepared without any consultation with Cockerell's modern biographer, David Watkin — is for necessary new facilities and, perhaps, their "high tec" style will do no more harm to the original architecture. So does it matter to devalue the portico? *Yes it does.* This is barbarism: the wilful, ignorant betrayal of a building's purpose, undermining its logic and integrity.

What on earth do these silly architects think porticoes are *for*? A portico is a symbol: a monumental, ornamental enhancement of an entrance, here resonant of a temple of the arts. It is also practical: a shelter which clearly indicates the way in. Good architecture tells you what to do and where to go.

So often, of course, it is impossible to tell how to enter a modern building, and difficult to know where to go once inside. But with traditional buildings, Classical or whatever, there is no such confusion or pointless ambiguity. And a Classical portico is one of the supreme architectural statements of western civilization. Don't Stanton Williams understand that? Or don't they care? Is this ignorance, or just arrogant contempt? For the public naturally will still try to penetrate Cockerell's portico, only to find a notice saying "No Entry. Enter by the door on the left".

It is an architectural, aesthetic, intellectual and moral cop-out. And who is the vain and tiresome donor who is so determined to spoil the Ashmolean, whose largesse wins over opposition which ought to know better, who always knows he knows best? Step forward My Lord Palumbo!

As Palumbo constantly drones on about "excellence", you might think he could see the point of Cockerell's masterpiece. But no; this man of taste is so very certain that a fashionable modern intervention can only improve things. Well, it won't!

'Piloti'

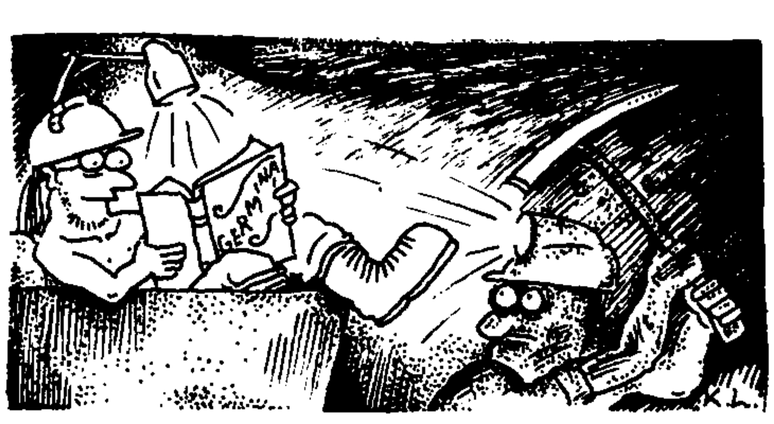
Pseuds Corner

A funny thing happened to me in the theatre, a month ago, at the first night of Pinter's Moonlight (a masterpiece, by the way). An hour into the play, during a scene with Ian Holm, Anna Massey and Edward de Souza, I suddenly realised that I had absolutely no idea what the actors were doing. By which I don't mean that their performances were in any way poor or unfocused. Quite the contrary. It was, instead, as if I'd been staring at them for so long (the theatre is one of the few places in the world where it's regarded as impolite not to stare) that, collectively, they had begun to resemble the sort of word, a word that might be as elementary as "the" or as rarefied as, well... "rarefied", that, if peered at for too long, would dissolve into a meaningless configuration of squiggles.

GILBERT ADAIR
Sunday Times

[Brian] Ferry is contemptuous of the class system that insists on using these discrepancies to paint him as a social climber. He "deeply regrets" letting slip to a journalist that his son's name was down for Eton ("among many other schools, and anyway I'm not bloody sending him to Holland Park Comprehensive").

The Guardian



On the Shelf

Graham King remembers how he first read Emile Zola's *Germinal* down a coalmine.

Sunday Times

MBA Courses — Institute of Professional Financial Managers
Founder Jeff Wooller MBA MSc PhD ACIB ACIS AIDPM FCA FCCA FCEA FSCA IPFM MAAT MCT.

Accountancy Age

M.E. Bailey is graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University, studying political theory. In what passes for her spare time, she reads science fiction, romance and mystery novels, draws lots of vagina dentatas and plays bass for a feminist rock group, uberWENSCH.

Contributors list for
Up Against Foucault **(Routledge)**

"Fucking" is a brilliant word. You can use is as an adjective, a verb... anything. It's percussive with that k in the middle. In fact I think fuckoff is the best word in the English language..

JIM DAVIDSON
Independent

Murphy's "as happy as Larry, short for Lazarus" moves Ricks to note the locution's real (if disputed) derivation from the Australian pugilist Larry Foley. "One can see why Beckett would not want to be bilked by a boxer, fobbed off with a Foley." Nor indeed, doodled by a digger, welshed on by a wallaby, occluded ny an ocker. Immediately we're given Beckett's translation of Apollinaire's *"Tu ressembles au Lazare affole par le jour." Affole* is not quite a Foley, but it still bounds up from the page, mad for a fight. Aren't Ricksians supposed to notice chimes like this?

MARTIN CROPPER
Sunday Times

CONTRIBUTORS: D. Armstrong, R. Rush, J. James, A. Caley, Anon, D. Edwards, Anon. **£10 paid for entries**

TV

Gladiators (LWT)
Happy Families (BBC1)

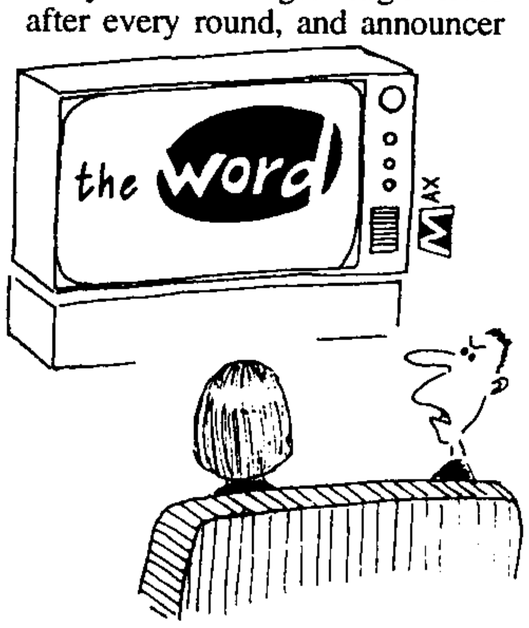
INFLUENCES, influences. Every programme has them and every TV critic worth his brief nap in the afternoon can happily trot them out when, owing to circumstances beyond his control, he hasn't actually got anything else to say.

But of all the old shows from the sixties and seventies that might conceivably be cited as seminal works, one in particular always seems to be forgotten. Why? Could it be its reliance on people dressed as giant vegetables? Or perhaps its early association with David Vine?

Whatever the reason, this programme's omission from the historical debate is an injustice that must be rectified. For when the definitive appraisal of late twentieth-century British TV comes to be written, historians will surely acknowledge the pivotal role of *It's A Knockout*.

Right now, for example, at the height of the viewing season, the most important television night of the week leans heavily on two programmes whose debt to Stuart Hall is so great he should be receiving royalties. On ITV, Saturday night's entertainment schedule kicks off with the vastly popular **Gladiators**, while an outrageous duplicate of the show, **Happy Families**, attempts to achieve similar ratings for BBC1. Each is fast, zappy, glossy and brashly up-to-date — and pure *Knockout*.

Gladiators, of course, has been a huge success, a triumph of vulgarity in a rejigged ITV schedule hardly characterised by its restraint. On the face of it, no show could be more proudly or obviously American in origin. Cheerleaders wave pom-poms, everyone exchanges high fives after every round, and announcer



"I think the word is 'off' "

John Sachs cries "Go for it!" as though he really means it. In fact, the secret of the show is its absolute lack of irony: one small snigger, and the whole ridiculous edifice would crash to the ground.

And yet beneath the fake tans and bulging pectorals lies the indelible mark of Eddie Waring and his Mini-Marathon. People fight each other with giant cotton buds, or roll around in huge metal spheres trying to knock each other flying. And then there are the Gladiators themselves. Huge and throbbing, with muscles so well oiled you could fry chips on them, they nonetheless exhibit a certain end-of-pier quality.

Interviewed during the show, most of them turn out to have voices like Rowan Atkinson's Mr Bean. Even Wolf, the self-appointed Hard Man of the group, is long on bark and short on bite. Once, when someone in the audience made a satirical comment about Red Riding Hood, Wolf ran to the perimeter of the playing area and started growling menacingly. Violence? Retribution? No, the great softy merely said: "They're just lucky I'm in a good mood" and withdrew with a feeble sneer.

Happy Families, meanwhile, is a classic BBC spoiler; the huge contraptions used for its games, the equally crazed audience and the mischievous time slot (it starts 20 minutes earlier than *Gladiators*) make its intentions thoroughly clear. And yet, with a catchphrase that even Bruce Forsyth would balk at ("Crank up your granny!"), and copresenters of worrying chirpiness in Sarah Greene and Andrew O'Connor, *Happy Families* veers even closer to the *It's A Knockout* template.

Instead of musclebound fitness instructors, the contestants are "ordinary" families who leap merrily around the giant arena playing a series of ridiculous games very badly. The grannies, meanwhile, sit in their cages knitting or reading *People's Friend*, and the whole exercise is carried out with a wacky post-modernist twinkle in its eye — the series' only real mistake. *It's A Knockout*, beneath the jocularity, was always deadly serious, and *Gladiators* doesn't even bother with the jocularity. It's no surprise that *Happy Families* has been far less successful in ratings terms than either.

Still, one should not be too disapproving. These shows may make *Blind Date* look like *The Late Show*, but if the glorious legacy of *It's A Knockout* lives on in them, they can't be all bad. All that remains now is for this brave and pioneering experiment finally to be accepted as such by a previously dubious television establishment.

"Sir Stuart Hall", anyone?

'Couch Potato'

MEDIA NEWS

RESIDENTS of Lovett Way, Neasden, are used to seeing TV crews outside No 16, which has been the hideout of, variously, a fugitive accused of involvement in the Brinks-Matt gold bullion robbery; of the fatherly Bishop of Galway; and now of media-shy pop star Michael Jackson.

As the London telephone directory reveals, 16 Lovett Way is the home address of Rocky Ryan, veteran media hoaxer. Last Saturday, Ryan was at it again, placing three reverse charge calls to the New York offices of ABC, NBC and CBS.

NBC would not accept the charge; ABC took the call but did not act on it; CBS took the bait. In addition, Ryan called ITN. In each case he put on his favoured Irish accent and pretended to be an informant who worked in showbusiness. He would not be specific, but gave the impression he might be a driver and that he could not give his name because it would be bad for business.

He said a "Mr Greenberg" was in charge of trying to smuggle Michael Jackson out of the country, explaining that this Greenberg had extensive experience having smuggled Pablo Escobar out of Colombia. The informant said he did not want any money, that he knew Jackson had not been convicted — but that as a father and grandfather he wanted to see him answer the charges in court. He told CBS and ITN that Jacko could be found at a discreet address in Neasden.

The CBS crew, led by freelance reporter Donald Milton, arrived on Ryan's doorstep at 11.30pm and did not leave until 4am the following morning. The ITN newsdesk roused reporter John Irvine from his sleep. He arrived with a crew at 2 am and they too camped outside Ryan's house until 4 am.

Ryan kept them on tenterhooks, periodically answering the doorbell and saying things like "No comment" or "He's trying to get some sleep", and, eventually, "He's not here". When the lights in the house went out, huge arc lights were switched on in the street.

The game was up when some local youths asked the hacks: "What are you doing outside Rocky's house?" John Irvine then kicked Ryan's door and left in a fury. Perhaps ITN should post a warning notice with Ryan's address in its newsroom.

LUVVIES

For Natasha Richardson, playing the highly strung Catharine in *Suddenly Last Summer*, Tennessee Williams' steamy tale of madness and jealousy, was an ambition she had nurtured since drama school. "And it's one of the hardest things I have ever had to do," she admits. "A bit like climbing Everest without any footholds." But, adds the daughter of Vanessa Redgrave, the struggle was worth it.

TV Times

Submitted by E. Strobes.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

JUST FANCY THAT

Booker winners

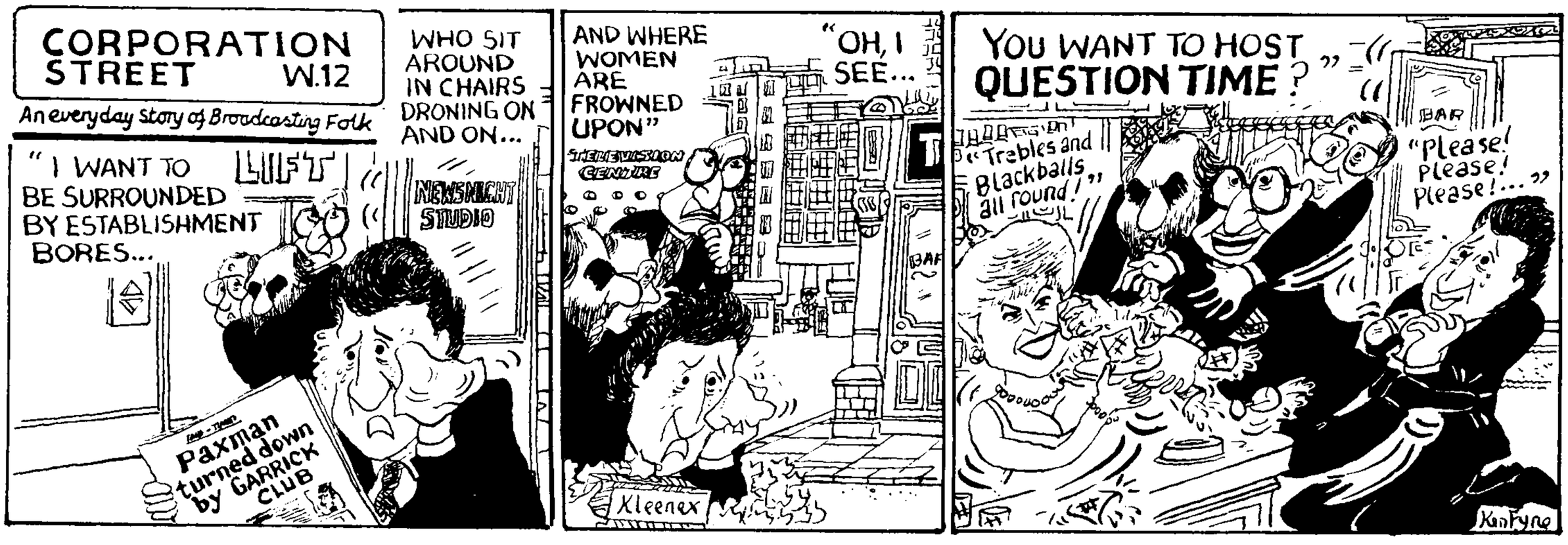
Kenneth Clarke Ha Ha Ha

Hilarious story of boy with mental age of ten who finds it difficult to add up.

HEARD the working title for his Budget speech? "Kenneth Clarke Ha Ha Ha."

P Eye 5.11.93

Maev Kennedy Grauniad 9.11.93



"We're not getting into bed with Michael Jackson"

DESPITE Rupert Murdoch's generosity in handing control of Hong Kong's pro-democracy *South China Morning Post* to the Beijing government (*Eye* 829), China's senile autocracy shows little sign of repaying the favour.

Premier Li Peng has banned the future manufacture and sale of satellite dishes, thus depriving much of the human race of the chance to watch Star tv, the Asian version of Sky which Murdoch recently bought.

The Digger had been hoping to gain kudos with the geriatric dictators by covering the Olympics exclusively and live on Star, BSkyB and his American Fox network, cutting out terrestrial competitors. Alas Sydney won the Olympics, so Murdoch must wait for other opportunities to suck up to the team who gave the world Tiananmen Square.

The Aussie Olympiad will, however, allow Murdoch to link his inter-continental satellite channels to the disadvantage of, for example, the BBC, whose senior managers persist (despite litigation between BBC World Service tv's Middle East service and Sky News) in deluding themselves that Murdoch is no real threat to the corporation's future.

ITN's new chief executive David Gordon, headhunted from *The Economist*, has set out his vision for the future in a memo headed "Breaking Through The Barriers".

Disillusioned staff have already renamed the document "Scraping Through The Bottom of the Barrel", since its main purpose seems to be to ensure that ITN's already enfeebled news reports take a further nose-dive.

The main beneficiary of the scheme is Rupert Murdoch's Sky, which is taking advantage of ITN hacks' low morale by going on a well-financed poaching expedition. It has already hired senior foreign-desk fixer Mike Nolan for a rumoured £80,000 with a brief to pick his own team to set up a South African bureau. This he has done by recruiting the entire ITN team in Johannesburg — including veteran hack Jeremy Thompson and award-winning cameraman Ian Robbie.

Globe-trotting ITN hack Peter Sharp, another former South Africa correspondent, has also defected to Sky. It is said that another star reporter, Penny Marshall, was intending to join the exodus, but was talked out of it by her husband, ex-ITN presenter Tim Ewart. The demoralised workforce is now waiting to see if there is any truth in the rumoured departure Skywards of ITN's Hong Kong correspondent, Mark Austin, and his cameraman. Other ITN names being targeted by Sky include David Chater, Stephen Capes and the great Trevor MacDonald himself.

Hopes that "Breaking Through the Barriers" might lift the gloom were swiftly dashed. In the document, Gordon promises "significant job enrichment possibilities" — but goes on to explain that these will include "further staff reductions" and other jobs "undergoing radical change or disappearing entirely".

No wonder many staff have concluded that they stand a better chance of "enrichment" by joining Murdoch's pay-roll.

JOHN BIRT'S mission to explain has become a farcical mission to dither judging by two BBC investigations into the bail-jumping Asil Nadir.

First, there has been a fruitless attempt by *Panorama* to prove that the Tory party bankroller was a victim of an international conspiracy by intelligence services. For more than nine months it has had a team scouring the world for evidence that Nadir was brought down by spooks for "political reasons", the thesis being that western governments wanted him charged with theft and fraud to destabilise the Northern Cypriot economy.

A keen advocate of this theory was Roger Ratcliffe, former failed *Sunday Times* hack, who has worked for *Panorama* on the Nadir film alongside BBC reporter John Drury. Nadir was clearly grateful for such a sympathetic investigation. Ratcliffe then did "some research for Nadir" in Cyprus. What did this entail? "It was all very embarrassing", a BBC source said.

While *Panorama*'s old researcher is cosy with Nadir, the programme also has former Tory minister Michael Mates as a devoted source. The *Eye* has a confidential note of a telephone conversation in which he gleefully describes the programme's line.

While filming in Cyprus, Mates says, *Panorama* obtained "evidence of documents which apparently prove a plot involving the Cypriot, British and American intelligence services" — and no doubt the Barsetshire Ferret Racing Team, too — to bring about Nadir's downfall. Mates reports that he was now even more convinced of a conspiracy "to undermine Nadir in order to achieve a political goal — ie, the collapse of N. Cyprus". And he concludes that "*Panorama* found no evidence of illegal share dealings or missing funds".

However, while the Beeb has still to broadcast *Panorama*'s pro-Nadir special (filmed in March) *The Money Programme* has its own investigation in the can — and it which takes the rather more traditional view of Mr Nadir's probity.

As BBC hacks can't agree whether Nadir is a crook or victim, it is left to John "Solomon" Birt to decide. With the fence post stuck firmly in the bottom of his Armani suit, he intends to run both programmes...

THE ONWARD march of Birtist efficiency has taken a great leap forward with the reshuffle of the BBC's news and current affairs management team.

The anonymous Peter Bell, formerly editor of TV news and current affairs, becomes "bi-media" head of news (ie, covering both radio and telly). Does this save a management post? Er, no: his old job will still exist and is about to be advertised.

But the radio part of his new brief will surely save a job at Broadcasting House? Er, no: the former head of the radio newsroom, the equally anonymous Steve Mitchell, is to take charge of radio news and current affairs.

Bell will also be served by a new "bi-media managing editor" (whose task will be "ensuring coordinated development") and a "bi-media head of weekly programmes". Alongside this expanding empire will be Chris Cramer's newsgathering conglomerate, consisting of several more tiers of management.

So, the result of the changes is another layer of bureaucracy, with the existing non-entities doing largely the same jobs but at a higher rate of pay. None of them, it need hardly be added, will do anything as onerous as edit a bulletin or a programme, but they will spend a lot of time talking to one another in meetings. John Birt is said to be delighted.

"Did you pack your trunk yourself, Ms Elephant?"

JOHN BIRT is telling everyone that he has found an extra £100 million to invest in BBC programme-making — but he won't say where the money is coming from.

In fact, it is what creative accountants call "circular money". Budgets for all programmes have had a percentage sliced off them, thereby creating a pile of money available to invest in programmes — which have just had their budgets cut.

BARGAINS

LAST week the *Daily Mail* raved about its "fabulous US flight offer" with Virgin Atlantic — four tokens cut from the paper would yield a special booking form offering two seats for the price of one.

Lucky *Mail* readers could get two tickets to Orlando for just £459 on weekday departures and a bargain £489 at weekends. The flaw is that the *Mail*'s "sensational" offer isn't sensational at all.

It is based on full economy fares, which virtually no one pays. A glance at the paper's own travel ads reveals that Virgin Holidays, Branson's leisure arm, currently offers one week fly-drive trips to Orlando for £219 per person, a considerable saving on the two for the price of one promotion, but with free car hire thrown in.

VERY OLD LIBEL NEWS

NOVEMBER's *Tatler* carries a long, sympathetic interview with Lord Aldington — *né* Toby Low — about his interminable libel dispute with Nikolai Tolstoy. Describing his one and only meeting with Tolstoy, at Sandhurst in 1985, he says: "At the interview he was actually quite nice. He didn't confront me directly with his allegations. He simply asked me a lot of questions."

Alas, Toby's memory seems to be rather rusty when it comes to recalling what answers he gave to those questions. Of the post-war repatriation of the Cossacks, he now tells *Tatler*: "None of us who signed the orders knew or ought to have known that those people being sent back were likely to be killed." During his 1985 interview with Tolstoy, however, he said: "I remember [General] Arbuthnott felt very, very strongly that we should not, that we should be no party to this whole affair. He disliked sending any of them back. He thought it was just as wrong to send a Soviet Cossack back as a non-Soviet Cossack. Because he said that both were regrettable. They had been fighting for the Germans, and they were just going to be killed."

NOTICEBORES

MEDEA (Wyndham's)

"Here is the crowning role of Diana Rigg's career thus far, the performance which has restored her to the very summit of her own hyper-achieving generation of actresses."
Jack Tinker, Daily Mail

"... I find her performance leaves me rather cool."
Nicholas de Jongh, Evening Standard

ORCADIAN NEWS

AS THE hearing approaches of Orkney Island council's application to assume parental rights over the "W" children (see *Eyes* 829 and 832), the gathering publicity — mainly in the *Eye* — appears to be causing embarrassment.

Predictably, many establishment figures have issued statements supporting Orkney's social workers, with Lord Fraser of Carmyllie assuring all who inquire that the system is working perfectly well in Orkney.

And he is right — so long as you are a social worker. Then you can break the law, ignore social work guidelines, become part of the biggest fiasco in the history of social work, go unpunished *and* keep your well-paid job.

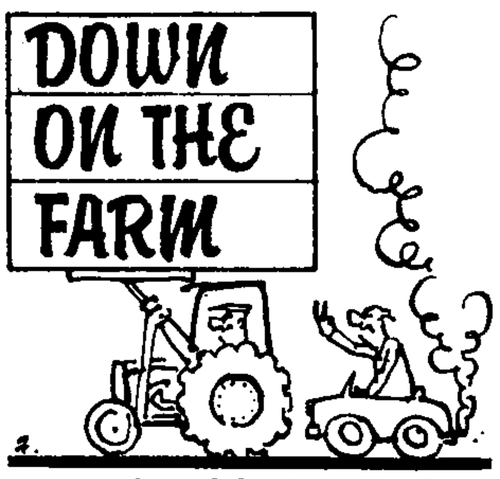
Moreover, Orkney's social workers even appear able to ignore articles of the UN convention on the rights of the child, which was ratified by the UK in 1991. In particular, articles 7, 8, 9.2, 9.3, 12 and 13.

Article 12, for example, states that a child has the right to freely express views in all matters — and in any judicial and administrative proceedings — affecting him or her. This right is being denied completely to the three youngest W children. Initially, all three were considered intelligent and articulate enough to undergo hours of unhindered interrogation, but now, despite being nearly three years older, they are considered too young to speak for themselves. They have not been told that they are entitled to representation and so are represented at hearings by social workers.

Article 13 states that the child shall have the right to receive and impart information of all kinds; the correspondence of three of the children is heavily censored both ways, and Mrs W does not know whether or not they receive the presents she sends them for birthdays and/or Christmas. It is a matter of record that presents sent to the children snatched in 1991 (*Eyes passim*) were kept by social workers and sometimes destroyed in their desperate search for evidence of satanic ritual abuse.

And so it goes on...

But OIC has things in hand. It has recently announced that is so disappointed with the social work department's run of bad publicity it is to produce a newsletter which will concentrate on all the good work of the department.



with 'New Muckspreader'

TIMOROUS British farmers, unlike their French cousins, have not yet blockaded the motorways around the capital. Nor have they laid siege to agriculture ministry offices, nor burnt effigies of the minister of agriculture. But things may be changing as the lunatic ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food (MAFF), assisted by the European Commission, continues its unbroken trail of cock-ups.

The latest is the dismantling of border controls on live animal imports from the community with the advent of the "single market" on 1 January this year. Animal diseases, from which the UK has been free, are being imported at an alarming rate. So far, the contagious abortion disease, brucellosis — which can also affect humans — has been allowed in, with potentially devastating effects.

The bloodstock industry is terrified by the prospect of an epidemic of equine viral arteritis (*Eye* 824), imported from Europe. Two more cases were detected in recently imported horses only last week, by private owners — despite the animals being accompanied by veterinary certificates which said the horses were disease-free.

Now, warble fly — the unpleasant parasites which can burrow into the flesh of cattle and reemerge through the hide, ruining the leather — has been reintroduced, after having been all but eradicated only two years ago. More than 36 affected areas have been declared by the ministry.

Nerve-gas related organophosphorus pesticides (OPs) have to be used in these areas, and farmers are expressing grave reservations about the health risks involved — not least because of the links between OPs and BSE. In the south-west some worried farmers are actually refusing to use these deadly agents.

It seems this might be the first stirrings of a rebellion. We may yet see blockades on the motorways and the burning may not be confined to effigies or stubble.

ACCORDING to a report from the Food Commission, there is so little real chicken in some chicken soups that the flavourings and salt often exceed the amount of meat.

Given the amount of food-poisoning associated with chicken consumption, perhaps this is the answer to the intractable problem of salmonella in poultry. Chicken-little soup could be followed by all manner of chicken-free chicken products, and table birds could be replaced by oven-ready pit-bull terriers, so solving yet another problem.

BACK in June the courageous veterinary surgeon Roger Eddy took on Wiltshire county council's chief animal health officer and well-known former car salesman Nigel Durnsford.

He was appealing against a conviction by Wiltshire magistrates after being fined £1,500 for causing "unnecessary suffering" to a pig he had sent off for slaughter after an abscess was found on its back leg. The conviction was overturned, leaving council chargepayers with an estimated £25,000 legal bill (*Eye* 822).

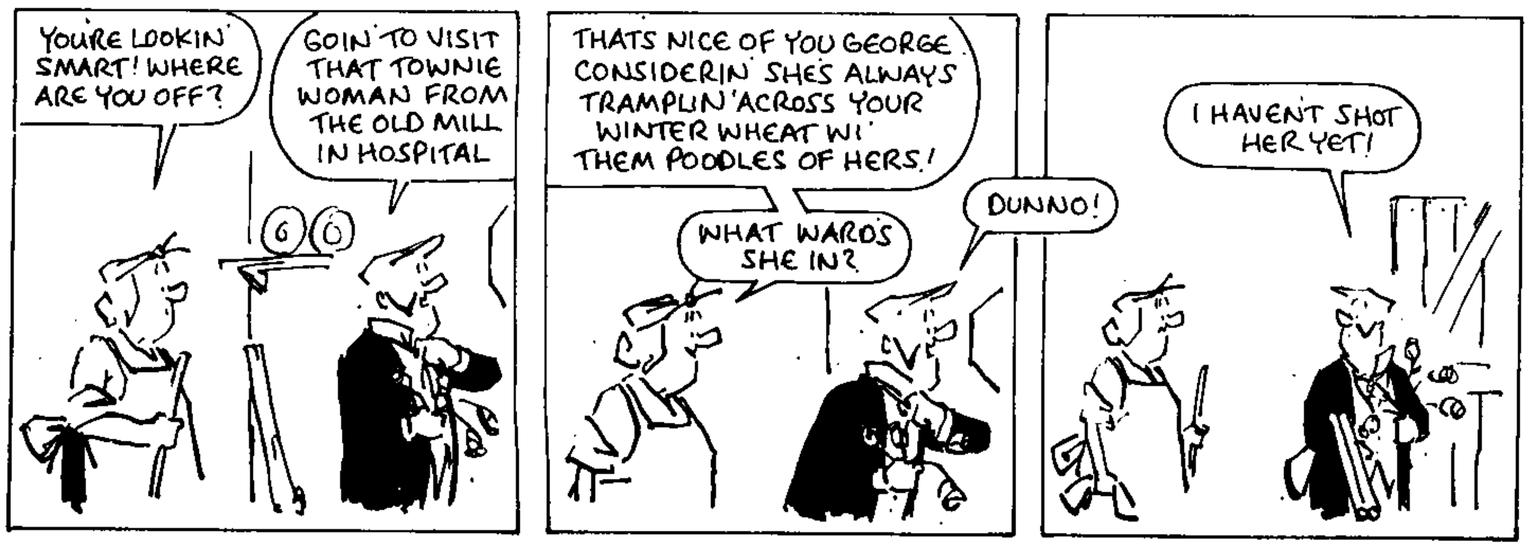
The appeal judge took the view that the legislation under which Mr Eddy had been prosecuted was certainly not designed to achieve the "wholly undesirable end" of rendering a professional man liable to an absolute criminal offence because he gave a professional opinion — in this case that the pig was fit to travel.

Despite this, Wiltshire is now proposing to appeal against the judgment. The cost to local chargepayers could amount to tens of thousands over and above the sum already paid. It would appear that there are no lengths to which the less than professional mad officials of the county will not go in an attempt to prove that they were right all along.

There is so little chance that they will win that any non-tax funded litigant would have given up long ago and conceded the point with good grace.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


YOU'RE LOOKIN' SMART! WHERE ARE YOU OFF?
GOIN' TO VISIT THAT TOWNIE WOMAN FROM THE OLD MILL IN HOSPITAL
THATS NICE OF YOU GEORGE CONSIDERIN' SHES ALWAYS TRAMPLIN' ACROSS YOUR WINTER WHEAT WI' THEM POODLES OF HERS!
WHAT WAROS SHE IN?
DUNNO!
I HAVENT SHOT HER YET!

HUNT NEWS

ON THE DAY that home secretary Michael Howard announced plans to criminalise hunt sabotage on the grounds that saboteurs were guilty of intimidation and violence towards hunting folk, there were a series of incidents in which saboteurs were the victims of intimidation and violence at the hands of, er, hunting folk.

A member of the Hampshire foxhunt whipped a number of saboteurs when they rescued a fox from the pack of hounds, though the fox subsequently died. A farmer who supports the Vale of Aylesbury foxhunt drove a tractor with a fork-lift attachment at four saboteurs (who jumped clear), before ramming their van.

A member of the Oxford hunt saboteurs was cropped by a rider with the Old Berks foxhunt. And, most serious of all, three saboteurs were admitted to the Lancaster Royal Infirmary with head wounds after being set upon by a group of riders and hunt supporters from the Vale of Lune Harriers.

SALLY DEEDES

LAST month Cardiff reader Peter Lewis was invited by South Wales Electricity (Swalec) to join — for £5.50 a month — its "comprehensive home emergency service".

Along with Home Emergency Services, a sister company of National Breakdown, Swalec claimed to be offering a first-rate package to cover household emergencies. "Just one call to the National Control Centre is all it takes to have a skilled tradesman on his way." The deal guaranteed free call out, no limit on the number of calls, and quality service 24 hours a day, every day.

Although tempted, Mr Lewis was overtaken by events when a strong smell of burning pervaded his house, coming from his meter and fusebox. It was followed by a loud bang as the house electrics fused. Mr Lewis immediately phoned the Swalec emergency number, and after 10 minutes a recorded message told him he was in a queue. When he eventually reported the fault he was told someone would be round as soon as possible.

Two hours later no one had arrived, so he contacted a private firm who turned up in 10 minutes and restored the power temporarily. Mr Lewis cancelled his emergency call to Swalec, who an hour later rang back to ask if there was a fire in the house.

Out of curiosity, Mr Lewis rang Swalec the next day to find out if there was a standard time for responding to an emergency. It was 24 hours, he was told.

● ***FOLLOWING my piece about batteries for BT's cordless phones having to be replaced by qualified technicians (costing customers of BT's repairs agency, Tantech, anything up to £36 a time), a reader in mobile communications points out the iniquity of the mark-up.***

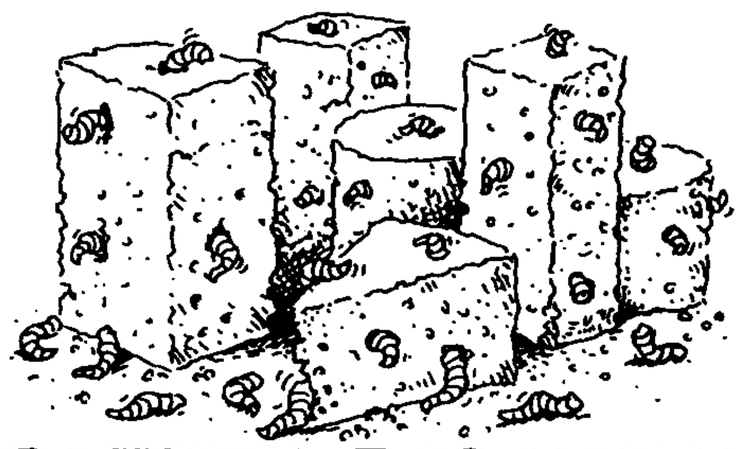
The trade price of BT's Freeway battery is just £2.38 — and it takes at most a couple of minutes to install. The reader passes on another tip for owners of BT mobile (ie Cellnet) phones. They should avoid official BT outlets when buying new powerpacks. The BT price is quoted as £76.38; the mail order price, same day dispatch included: £41.13.

SMALL publishers, campaigning organisations and anyone with friends or family abroad received an early and unwelcome Christmas present from the post office last week with its latest postal increases.

Circulars, newsletters and greetings cards which don't include written correspondence beyond a basic greeting have always been sent abroad at much lower rates than ordinary letter post. But the post office has decided that new postal charges will not make allowance for air mail printed matter below 100 grammes.

Big commercial publishers selling glossy magazines won't be affected, nor indeed will the producers of lighter items with a large circulation (they get bulk contracts).

Jim Cotton-Betteridge, head of Royal Mail International, said the post office was losing too much money on the "service" while maintaining that hardly anyone used it anyway. He added that it was necessary to simplify the tariff structure — upwards!



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BIRMINGHAM

NEW details have reached the *Eye* of the previous careers of Noshaba Hussain — appointed £28,000-a-year head teacher at Birmingham's Springfield junior school even though she has almost no paid school teaching experience.

Once deciphered, Hussain's application for the job makes startling reading. Her seven-line application letter contains four spelling mistakes, with another eight in her four-page CV.

Readers will recall her membership of the Muslim parliament — something she shares with Mohammed Yussouf, the chairman of the Springfield interview panel which appointed her and the person responsible for altering the job advertisement to remove the requirement for teaching experience.

It has now emerged that Hussain is also a member of the Sparkbrook Conservative party, as is another member of the three-strong interview panel, Aziz Ul-Hassan, former Tory council candidate in Sparkbrook and Yussouf's nephew.

Through her Tory links Hussain was appointed a governor at two Birmingham schools, Nelson Mandela primary and Holyhead Secondary, early this year. She has since been debarred from both after failing to attend a single meeting.

Meanwhile she is involved in a legal struggle with the liquidators of the Muslim Women's Trading Centre (MWTC), a voluntary group funded by the city council which she ran in Moseley. City treasurer Roger Burton put it into liquidation after a scathing audit report alleged that more than £30,000 had been put to "unauthorised use", which Hussain denies.

The liquidators, Pannell, Kerr, Forster, sold the MWTC's HQ and were about to hand the profits to the centre's many creditors when Hussain lodged a claim for £40,000 in wages. Then, a strange company, the Al-Nisaa Academy, lodged a claim for *all* the £102,000 profit from the sale of the building. A company search reveals Hussain to be the director and her husband the secretary of the "academy". The land registry says it has no record of the building being owned by Al-Nisaa.

Back at Springfield, the rest of the school governors have lost patience. Yussouf has been deposed as chairman and Ul-Hassan has quit the board altogether and gone to Pakistan. A special meeting later this month is to consider Hussain's position.

TRADITION dictates that Birmingham's ruling Labour councillors look to the city to pay for their home improvements — but Councillor Mushtaq Rabbani has surpassed all records.

He has received a £52,000 urban renewal grant to renovate completely his five-bedroom house in Haughton Road, Handsworth. The grant was the third biggest ever made by the city, eating up a sixth of the urban renewal budget for the whole of Handsworth despite a huge backlog of applications.

It gave the unemployed Rabbani a new roof, bathroom, kitchen units, floorboards, windows and garden wall. But the council has given Rabbani other reasons to be cheerful, too. Earlier this year he told colleagues that his wife had left him and needed a new home. She was instantly given a council house in nearby Johnston Street even though a simple check would have shown that she and Rabbani are still living together.

Meanwhile the Labour party's Walworth Road HQ has sent investigators into Rabbani's Handsworth ward party over allegations that votes were bought with bribes ranging from £10 to whole carpets. Rabbani ousted the sitting councillor, Saeed Abdi, in a reselection battle.

TAMESIDE

THE Labour council's laughable decision to privatise its old people's homes has ended in disaster as the *Eye* predicted.

Three years ago Tameside handed over the homes to a newly-formed non-profitmaking private company, Tameside Enterprises Ltd (TEL), in which it had a 16 per cent stake. The transfer was masterminded by council policy director Paul Stonier, a failed Labour parliamentary candidate, who was duly appointed company secretary and executive director.

Stonier has now been sacked for gross misconduct while Tameside Enterprises, unsurprisingly, hurtles towards bankruptcy. Despite his £60,000 annual salary, Stonier made himself a £16,000 unsecured loan from the company — he later paid it back with interest — and sold his car to the company at its original price.

Contracts to refurbish the homes for the elderly often went to friends without going out to tender. Other jobs were awarded nepotistically. Labour councillor Harry Stachini was appointed as the firm's driver — despite his notorious drinking record; the wife of council leader Roy Oldham was taken on as consultant; and a computer services contract was awarded to a company run by a local Labour party member.

TEL has had no problem fulfilling the *non-profitmaking* side of its brief: after trading insolvently, company debts recently topped £2 million, with £400,000 owed to the cuts-ravaged local health authority.

ROTHERHAM

EVERY cloud has a silver lining — even in an unemployment blackspot like Rotherham.

Energy secretary Tim Eggar's determination to close the Yorkshire coalfield and import foreign coal hits the borough hard, and there is now so little work in Rotherham that the Labour council has set up an anti-poverty strategy unit.

Its first manager is to be one Ken Furnell, 50, who has even known a bit of unemployment himself. He was on t'dole for a whole month after taking voluntary early retirement from his management post at local Rother Valley College — early retirement sweetened by ten years' extra pension credits.

In his new job Furnell will get £18,000 a year, which is very good money in South Yorkshire. But the appointment has outraged Rotherham. Even the pro-Labour *Rotherham Advertiser* has described it as scandalous.

The local People's Party, however, says he is the best man for the non-job. And well it might. Red Ken Furnell is married to Rotherham Labour councillor Irene Furnell and just happens to be president of Rotherham Labour party.

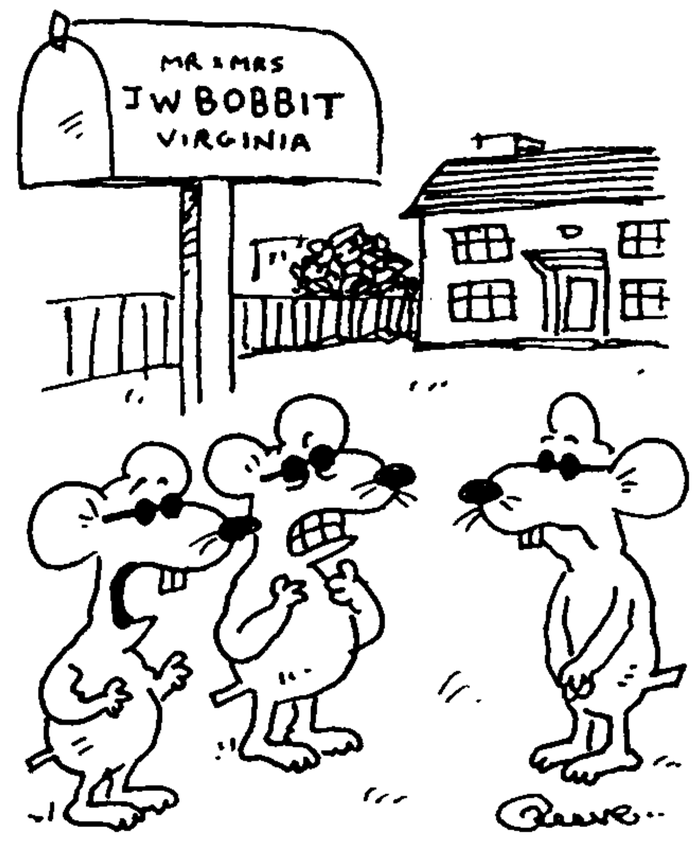
BOOTHFERRY

ALL sorts of nasty characters are posing as Tory councillors these days — people like power-mad Doreen Engall, a parish councillor in Holme-on-Spalding, a borough councillor and former mayor of Boothferry, and a Humberside county councillor to boot.

Engall has not been getting on too well with her neighbours, Allan Adams and his tenant, Peter Boscher. In fact, she has threatened to "kick" them, "belt" them and "smack them in the gob" following a dispute about the boundary between their properties.

Concerned for their safety, Adams and Boscher secretly videoed the crazed Conservative and recorded her via an external microphone. In no time at all they caught Engall telling her gardener to go to the neighbours' local pub and "start a fight... trip them up or spill beer over them. I love a punch-up."

Soon after, Adams and Boscher were visited by workmen with chainsaws — allegedly hired by the councillor — to waste the fence. When that failed Engall turned her attentions to the local postie whom she urged to tear up benefit cheques bound for Adams's house, much to the chagrin of the royal mail and Inspector Knacker.



"She cut off his WHAT with a carving knife?!"

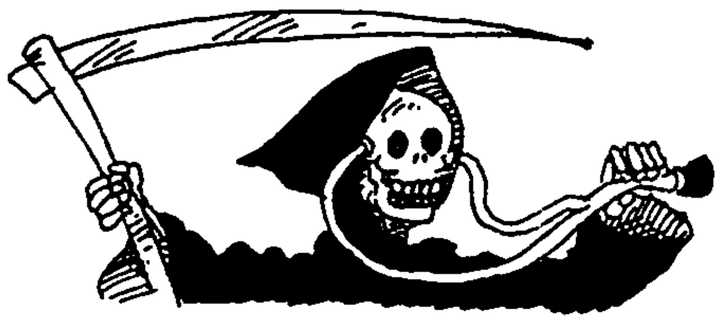
POLICE 5

MERSEYSIDE taxpayers are unhappy to learn that they must pay the £591,000 legal bill run up by their chief constable in the Alison Halford sex discrimination case.

One member of the Merseyside police authority (MPA), describing the affair as a "complete fiasco", claimed the MPA had been led to believe that the police were insured against such cases. But it seems that police insurers MMI will only cough up if Merseyside police admit that Halford's case against them was justified.

The pride of Murkeyside's top brass makes such an admission impossible, so taxpayers must dig into their pockets to save the faces of the higher ranking knackers. And this latest twist in the saga underlines the MPA's failure to control the spiralling costs in the public interest. The sum is only part of the cost to the police and the home office, with the final bill estimated at more than £1 million.

HUSBAND



DOING THE ROUNDS

LAST MONTH the national association of health authorities and trusts (NAHAT) announced its vision of the NHS in the next century. "The emphasis on the hospital bed as the currency of health care should," it claims, "disappear."

Accordingly, **Greater Glasgow Health Board** has decided to reduce **Glasgow's** acute medical beds by 29 percent by 2001. Unfortunately, with bed shortages prevalent across the country, the sums don't quite add up.

The demand for medical beds at Glasgow's **Stobhill hospital** rose by 32 percent from 1980 to 1991, with bed occupancy rates reaching 100 percent over the winter.

A 68-year-old patient was recently discharged from **London's National Centre for Neurosciences** after surgery to remove a pituitary tumour. A day later, she became semi-conscious but could not be readmitted... because there were *no beds available*. Nor was the **London Ambulance Service** able to provide an emergency vehicle to take her elsewhere.

In desperation her GP, Dr Jonathan Charlton, drove her to **Northwick Park hospital** where she had to spend the night in the casualty department... *because there were no beds*. Two months ago, another patient of Dr Charlton's **Harrow** practice had to wait 45 minutes for an ambulance after sustaining a stab wound to the heart. The patient's charter states that emergency vehicles should arrive within 14 minutes.

In **Timperley, Cheshire**, two critically ill patients were refused admission to the local emergency unit *because there were no beds*, and in the **Greater Manchester** area, three patients had to be taken to **Blackpool's Victoria Infirmary** because all of the city's *70 intensive care beds were occupied*. All subsequently died.

In **Salford**, children are being denied cancer treatment because of *bed shortages*, compounded by the closure of **Salford Royal Infirmary**. And at **London's Ealing hospital**, elderly patients are sleeping in corridors because it takes up to 50 days to find them a place in a nursing home.

In **Birmingham**, an emergency meeting between medical directors, managers and GPs failed to resolve the city's bed crisis. Some hospitals have treated 41 percent more patients than contracted for and emergency admissions are up 16 percent on last year. One patient with unstable angina was refused admission to **Dudley Road hospital** and another with a punctured lung couldn't get into **Heartlands hospital**.

As local medical committee secretary Dr Charles Zuckerman put it: "We used to have a reasonable system, but now it's bloody anarchy." Last month, **South Birmingham health authority** approved a £10 million savings-plan to be implemented by 1988. This will involve the loss of several more hospitals (both **Selly Oak** and the **General** are under threat)... *and a further 1,200 beds*.

● MANAGERS at **St Richard's hospital** near **Chichester** have told non-fundholding GPs that new patients requiring non-urgent surgery will have to wait until at least April 1994 because of a predicted contract overspend. In **Carlisle**, 800 operations have been postponed because surgeons have completed their contracts just seven months into the financial year, although fundholding GPs have been invited to buy extra operations to keep the theatres open.

In **Reading**, the **Royal Berkshire and Battle hospitals trust** has also stopped non-urgent surgery on 500 fundless patients. And a patient attending the gynaecology department at **Harlow's Princess Alexandra hospital** was told that as her GP was a non-fundholder she would have to wait 18 months for her operation — six months longer than fundholders' patients. The hospital's advice: switch to a fundholding GP.

● SOME fundholding GPs are having trouble coming to terms with rationing. The **Dunorlan** practice in **Tunbridge Wells** has ordered the local hospital to seek permission before treating its patients because a disproportionate amount of money was being spent on hip replacements. And **Yorkshire** fundholders have imposed spending limits on local hospitals after finding themselves £2.3 million over budget. The **Penny Meadow** practice in **Ashton-under-Lyme, Manchester**, has cancelled all non-urgent and day case surgery until January after discovering an £81,000 deficit.

● **EAST Gloucestershire NHS trust** is proposing to close the children's ward and stop the out-of-hours emergency service at **Cirencester hospital**, forcing patients to travel to **Cheltenham**. Cash shortages at **Dundee royal infirmary** have meant sick children are being denied access to the MRI scanner and all the hospitals in the **Dundee teaching hospitals NHS trust (Ninewells, DRI, King's Cross** and the limb fitting and dental hospitals) have been ordered to "pace" activities because they are treating too many patients too quickly.

● IN **SURREY**, **Queen Mary's** and **St Helier hospitals** are under threat from plans released by the **south-west Thames regional health authority**. The £2 million indebted **Essex Rivers healthcare trust** has imposed a 73 percent rent increase for student nurses and replaced all the bulbs in their desk top lamps with more efficient neon bulbs. Unfortunately, the new bulbs are so heavy that the lamps topple over. Miss Myrna C. Johns, the accommodation bureau's environmental services manager, has decided to change them back again.

● **SOUTHLANDS hospital** in **Shoreham, Sussex**, has received a £16,000 fine from Mrs Bottomley for allowing four patients to wait more than 18 months for hip and knee operations (*Eyes passim*). As chief executive Alan Randall put it: "We slipped up here and we will have to pay the price. The money will have to come out of our orthopaedic budget which means we won't be able to carry out as many operations as we would like. More urgent operations may have to wait while we do this more routine work."

● THE 99 NEW trusts due to swing into action on 1 April 1994 will each receive up to £500,000 for "administrative costs", much of which will be spent on stationery, logos and signs for the cleverly renamed hospitals.

These include the **New Possibilities NHS trust** in **north-east Thames, Rockingham Forest NHS trust** in **Oxford, Riverside community healthcare NHS trust** in **East Anglia, Chichester priority care services NHS trust** in **south-west Thames**, the **King's Mill centre for health care services NHS trust** in **Trent** and **CommuniCare NHS trust** in the **north-western region**.

Mrs Bottomley has yet to decide on **Dudley priority health NHS trust** in the **West Midlands, Scope NHS trust** in **south-west Thames** or the **Mancunian community healthcare NHS trust**. However, the sensibly-named **Royal Manchester children's hospital** has failed in its bid to become a trust.

M.D.

VULTURES are hovering over the remains of the once-powerful but now bankrupt building workers' union, Ucatt, which is being kept afloat by the Unity Trust Bank, 67 per cent-owned by trade unions.

The TGWU, GMB, AEEU and MSF are interested in picking up Ucatt's dwindling membership, but have no interest in sorting out its £2.2 million debts. Something must be done soon because new TUC general-secretary John Monks cannot have the embarrassment of seeing one of the TUC's oldest affiliates go down the tubes.

Meanwhile creditors, including lawyers, are queuing to be paid, while some brother unions have accepted that their loans will never be repaid. UCATT has been mismanaged for years, so sympathy should be felt for the new general-secretary George Brumwell, whose job is akin to deck chair rearranger on the Titanic.

Still unpublished is the £100,000 report into Ucatt's financial affairs, commissioned by the new executive from John Hand QC. It alleges some amazing wheeler-dealing by officials:

● For years, union financial adviser Peter Cosslett earned commission on investments in stocks and shares without the union's knowledge.

● Staff claimed "round sum" expenses for attending conferences without receipts, and former executive members making trips on union business claimed both rail fares *and* petrol money.

● Lavish entertainment was laid on at a London hotel for Russian visitors — one Ucatt official spending £70 a night on beer and spirits.

● Blank cheques were issued to officials for various activities; vital financial files disappeared at HQ and in the regions; and evidence of ballot-rigging was "shredded".

● According to Cosslett, false affiliation fees to the TUC and Labour party has cost the union £200,000 a year.

Hand's report also reveals that the union has owned five houses for many years. Unfortunately, some executive members say they have been unaware of their existence and that they cannot be found in annual reports and accounts.

Former union employees who live in the homes have paid peppercorn rents for donkeys years while the union has picked up the maintenance bills. The new executive has upped the rents, but the extra cash comes too late to save Ucatt from what looks like impending financial ruin.

UNISON, Britain's biggest union following the merger of Nalgo, Nupe and Cohse, is embarrassed now that its London offices have a new landlord.

The Libyan National Oil Company — Un Al Jawabi — has bought the nine-storey block in High Holborn in which Unison rented two floors from previous owners Midshire Property Ltd.

If left-wing Unison chiefs like Alan Jinkinson and Rodney Bickerstaffe grow bored slagging off John Major, they can always ask their new landlord, Colonel Gadaffi, for help and advice.

'Blackleg'

ENERGY NEWS

PRESENTING National Power's half-yearly report, chief executive John Baker explained sorrowfully he had to import foreign coal because it had less sulphur than the British variety.

He also explained he would not be installing more FGD (flue gas de-sulphurisation) equipment which would enable his firm to burn British coal. The reason of course is money.

This was the same John Baker who in a spectacular display of humbug told the trade and industry select committee less than a year ago: "We have no difficulties ourselves in envisaging burning more British mined coal, we would be very happy to do that." But he is even happier not to do that if it costs money to produce a clean burn and when the costs cut into profits.

National Power made £250 million profit in the last six months. This was up from £201 million; the improvement coming from selling less electricity. This is typical of the privatised system, which rewards the use of only the most energy-efficient power stations and shuts down the others. A little more of this and a really cold winter and we should be back to power cuts.

The problem for Professor Stephen Littlechild, architect of privatisation and director of the regulatory body Offer, is whether to refer National Power and PowerGen to the monopolies commission. He would like to, but it would wreck the government's chance of flogging off its remaining 40 percent shareholding. The treasury has assumed it will collect £3 billion.

Will Littlechild fulfil his duty to the nation — and help destroy the government's financial prospects and its privatisation programme? His five-year contract expires next September and he would like to be reappointed and end up with a peerage. He faces an interesting dilemma.

● JOHN BAKER also told hacks that the £3.5 billion twin-reactor Sizewell C project planned by Nuclear Electric, the hugely subsidised state generator that is eating into National Power's market share, could not possibly be justified on economic grounds.

Could this be the same Baker who, as a director of the Central Electricity Generating Board, told the Sizewell inquiry that "worthwhile cost savings would result from the early construction of more nuclear capacity after Sizewell B"?

The fact that £92,079 of Baker's nearly tripled salary of £383,935 in 1992 came in performance-related bonuses — which would be at risk if the nuclear sector made much greater inroads into NP's market share — is entirely coincidental.

AS public consultation (held in secret) on the Thorp reprocessing plant draws to a close, the government is preparing to say that the plutonium factory will go ahead whatever the public says.

All that now stands in the way is a hearing brought by Greenpeace — and the precedents are not encouraging.

It was a judge (Parker) who agreed to the construction of Thorp in 1977 and that has already cost the country £2.8 billion. It was another judge (Layfield) who agreed to the building of Sizewell B because it would supply "cheap" electricity. A third judge (Barnes) recommended the building of Hinckley Point C even after the government had abandoned the idea. And now a fourth judge (French) says the increase in leukaemia cases in the next village to Sellafield has nothing to do with Sellafield.

Thorp will go ahead without disclosure of the contracts which are supposed to show that there would be expensive penalties to pay it the waste reprocessing plant were cancelled. This claim is fiction — according to the evidence of the QC who represented British Nuclear Fuels itself in court at the Sellafield enquiry, Lord Silsoe.

So how does BNFL justify its assertion that there would be vast penalties? A spokesman told the *Eye*: "This is a summary and interpretation by Silsoe. It is not a verbatim, line by line." Which does not challenge what Silsoe said. Nor did BNFL's leaders who heard him at the Windscale inquiry.

BNFL, meanwhile, still has to explain its impudence in commissioning "independent" financial analysis from Touche Ross, whose senior partner, John Roques, is a non-executive director of BNFL.

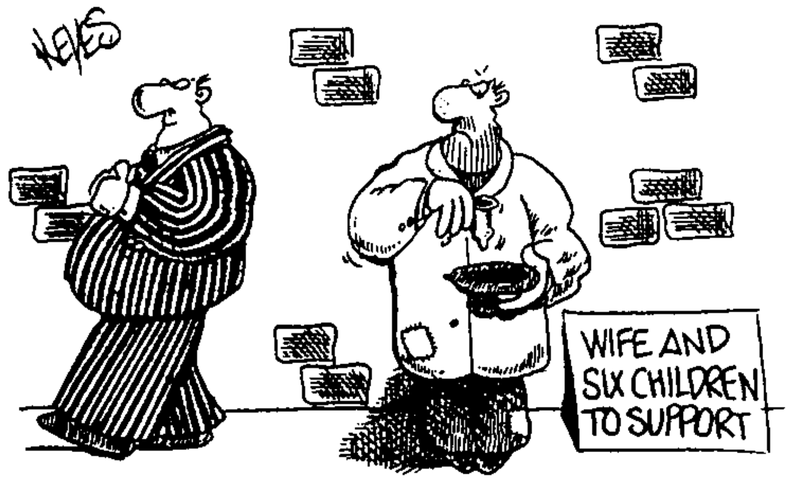
WATER NEWS

THE PRICE of water is to rise faster than inflation but, says Ofwat's Ian Byatt, the water regulator, not quite as fast as it has been rising.

To pay for the "moderation" he hopes the government will allow water companies to go slow on improving the quality of water. This will either mean getting Brussels to change its standards, which is unlikely, or defying its rulings.

Byatt accepts that meters are coming "to control demand" — ie that people will use less water if they have to pay for it by the pint. The justification offered is that there is no alternative, because with the abolition of rates new houses no longer have a rateable value on which to base water charges. But they have all been allocated a council tax banding and there is no reason why these could not be used as the guide.

The government justified privatisation of an essential monopoly like water on the grounds that only the stock market could provide the money needed to pay for higher standards of water. While the shareholders take their dividends, it is the customers who will have to pay.



WELSH WATER'S pollution of rivers has risen by an alarming 63 percent in the last year. The trend in England has been downwards.

Pollution caused by dumping crude sewage into rivers accounted for 786 incidents in Wales, an astonishing 13 percent of all types of pollution — from industry, agriculture and other sources — in the whole of England and Wales.

Perhaps it is appropriate, then, that Welsh Water's move to new headquarters at Alexandria Gate in Cardiff has brought home to it the problems caused by pollution.

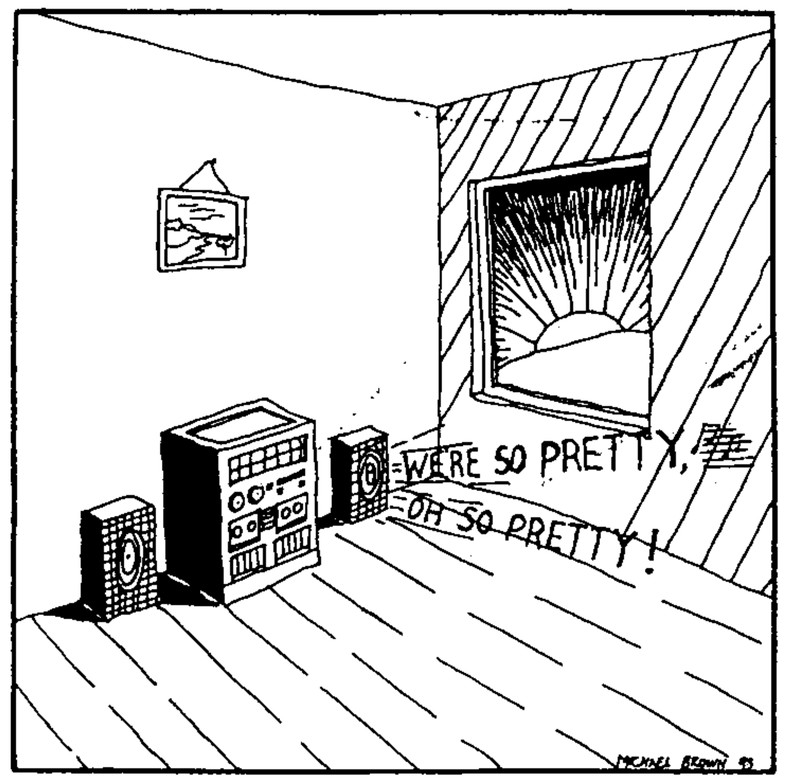
The offices, bought cheaply from bankrupt developers, looked like a bargain until it was revealed that contract work on a Welsh Water sewer less than half a mile away had to be stopped when Tarmac, the contractors, found radioactive waste in it.

The sewer, managed by Cardiff council for Welsh Water, is probably the most radioactive in Wales. One of the main sewers in the Welsh capital, it carries radioactive discharges from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Llanishen and the radioactive isotope manufacturers Amersham International in Coryton.

Its cocktail of radioactive poison, including tritium and beryllium, is chucked into the sea less than a mile from Welsh Water's nice new offices.

Why Welsh Water relocated here is not immediately clear because the site is not particularly accessible to the rest of Wales. But a closer look at the map reveals all. Alexandria Gate is just off the motorway on the *eastern* side of Cardiff, which is accessible to England.

This is very handy for Iain Evans, the new chairman who lives in London, and Graham Hawker, the new md who lives in Hereford. With Wales awash with crap — both radioactive and just plain smelly — the pair (combined salaries: nearly £300,000) are presumably keen to be able to get out of Wales as quickly as possible.



PISTOLS AT DAWN

POPEYE

FLOTATION watchers will have found the appointment of several clean pairs of hands to run Tring International, purveyors of ultra-cheap compact discs, entirely predictable.

However, the appointment of the former chairman of 3i, Alan Wheatley, must have raised a few eyebrows among his former colleagues.

Following Tring's expulsion from the Midem trade fair in January, several major record companies — including Island, Polygram and EMI — have instigated legal action against Tring for alleged copyright infringement.

Tring's founders, meanwhile, Philip Robinson and Mark Frey, have privately admitted that they will take the money and run as soon as the flotation is complete. It would be most unlikely if chairman Mark Levinson were not to do the same.

Regular *Eye* readers will recall that he is the son of Paul Levinson, late of Prestwich plc, which took over a similar budget music company, Object Enterprises, in the late 1980s. By coincidence the founders of that operation were none other than Philip Robinson and Mark Frey.

EDUCATION

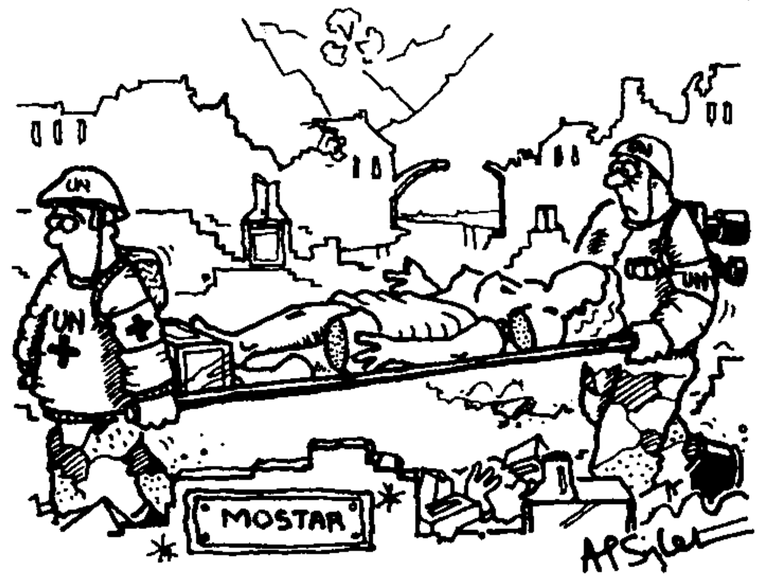
AS THE government creates a new quango evert day, its "Tories-only" policy in deciding who runs them remains unchallenged.

The latest beneficiary of ministerial patronage is Sir Christopher Benson: chairman of Boots the Chemist, the Housing Corporation and Sun Alliance.

Benson will get £33,340 a year for a two-day week as chairman of the Funding Agency for Schools, which will distribute £2 billion of taxpayers' money to schools that opt out of local authority control. According to education secretary John Patten, Benson will bring "energy, drive and determination" to the job. Sir Christopher is 60.

Teaching unions churlishly question Benson's credentials and claim he knows nothing about education. Ridiculous. As he says, some of his best friends are educationalists — and he was once a school governor.

The Sun Alliance group donated £50,000 to Tory party funds last year, but this has nothing to do with Sir Christopher winning the newly-created post.



Letters

Byting back

Sir,

Re. Leeds, Rotten Boroughs, 5.11.93.

Never let the facts spoil a good story — a cliché I know, but nevertheless true. Your story unfortunately repeats a false allegation that I "bought the (computer) system". At no time did I ever purchase or obtain any computer equipment for, or on behalf of, Leeds city council. The responsibility for advice and evaluation was and is that of the director of information technology. The original contract with Bull Information Systems was signed by the leader of Leeds city council and the chief legal officer in 1980. Me, I was just responsible for trying to protect children, the mentally ill and vulnerable elderly people, and of course being criticised for same. All future correspondence with my solicitors at the above address, please.

faithfully,
PROF. NORMAN TUTT,

Leeds.

Frosty reception

To: Mr Paul Frost, Private Eye

Dear Mr Frost,

The Things They Say (EYE *831)*

I refer to my telephone conversation regarding the above statement, taken from the NORTH NORFOLK NEWS, *September 10th 1993.*

This was a misquotation, which I took up with the Editor of the paper, who apologised for the mistake and published an apology the following week.

I very much regret you highlighting this statement in your publication, and it has caused me some distress with my local customers. I do not take your publications, but I received a copy through the post, from one of my customers, who felt I should know that this had again been published, not only locally but countrywide.

It would not have taken too much trouble to just check and see if this statement was in fact made by myself, before highlighting it in your paper.

Since speaking to you, I have several communications regarding this, and feel that some form of compensation should be due, and a full apology published in your paper.

The statement made by myself was "I tell my drivers that when you are dealing with the public you are NOT dealing with a sack of potatoes. I set very high standards."

I look forward to receiving your reply over this matter.

faithfully,
NORMAN J. SANDERS,

Sanders Coaches (First for coach travel), Holt, Norfolk.

So, farewell...

Sir,

In the light of the tasteless item, "No one killed for five minutes", in PRIVATE EYE *832, I am cancelling my subscription herewith.*

At a time when people in Northern Ireland are being mown down and people in England are potential and actual victims of bombings, it shows a staggering ineptness on your part to make a "joke" like this.

I don't want to have anything more to do with you; please cancel my subscription now. You can send the unexpired portion of my subscription to any of the relief funds set up to support victims of terrorism.

PETER MONEYPENNY,

Belfast.

Crazy name, crazy guy

Sir,

Actually, the biggest republic in the former Soviet Union was Russia. Kazakhstan was the second biggest.

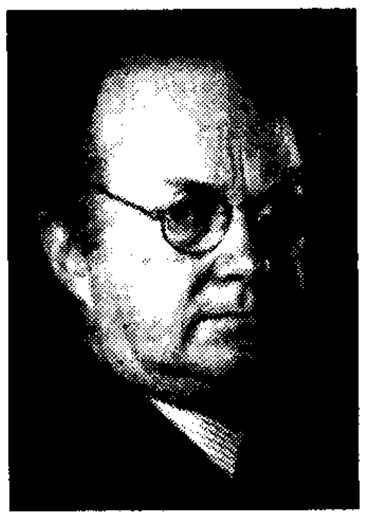
And you can't spell the name of Kazakhstan's canny president either. It's Nursultan Nazarbayev. He is one of the shrewdest politicians in the CIS and was an important power-broker in the events that led up to the 1991 Union Treaty.

Dos vedanya!
TOM CARTER,

Somerton, Somerset.

Lookalike

Waugh



Mainwaring

Sir,

Has anyone noticed, as I have, the remarkable similarity between that irascible old curmudgeon, Captain Mainwaring, leader of the Walmington-on-Sea home guard, and the irascible old curmudgeon, Auberon War, editor of the LITERARY REVIEW. *If wonder if they are consanguineous.*

TOM (STUPID BOY) CUTLER,

Hove, East Sussex.

Lean times

Sir,

You must get a better OBSERVER *mole. A few weeks after falsely reporting that I had been disciplined and sacked, you have been fed another load of old tosh* (EYE *831).*

Your story about me "creeping" to Chalker, Waldegrave and Gummer is make-believe. Before the election I wrote both Labour and Conservative friends defending marginal seats (including Lynda Chalker) wishing them well in their personal contests. Afterwards, I wrote William Waldegrave and said I was sorry his party had won. John Gummer and I do not correspond.

I did not "rubbish" Polly Ghazi in my letter (which you misquote) and have never done so. As the person who recruited her, I have the greatest respect for her work and frequently say so.

Apologies please,

GEOFFREY LEAN,

THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY, *London EC1.*

A prisoner abroad

Sir,

I take exception to Backbiter's inference (EYE *827) that Prisoners Abroad is somehow government controlled.*

Since being wrongfully-convicted overseas, I have had the good fortune of association with those administering the charity. The fact that someone from Blighty actually gives a damn helps many foreign-held prisoners make it through another day.

Therefore, I would suggest that in future you carefully confine your comments to criticizing those government officials who contribute to the continued existence of wrongful convictions, and refrain from besmirching the good name of a worthy charity.

sincerely,
J.C.,

Canada.

Poison Penh?

Sir,

Your Phnom Penh correspondent has obviously had one too many at the bar of the Foreign Correspondents' Club. There can be no other logical explanation for the ramblings of his latest despatch. Suggesting that the situation in Cambodia is no better than it was before the UN arrived, that the UN presence has been harmful to the country is ridiculous, as any objective observer of Cambodian affairs could tell you.

Of course problems remain, but the Khmer Rouge no longer pose the threat they once did, and "that election" WAS *a great success, and a tribute both to the Khmers who exercised their democratic rights, and the UN staff who organised it. Singling out William Shawcross for criticism was equally misguided. Mr Shawcross' coverage of Cambodian politics this year has been well-balanced, and widely quoted — which is perhaps why your correspondent dislikes him. A long spell of leave and a place on the home news desk may help your reporter gain a sense of perspective.*

Yours faithfully,
MS DEMELZA STUBBINGS,

London SW15.

Poor and proud

Sir,

I wrote to you recently about the high cost of being poor, which you recounted in your Sally Deedes column. I drew particular attention to Anglian Water savings stamps and the fact that one has to pay 75p to the post office after paying in the stamps.

In the letters column of PRIVATE EYE *831 you printed a letter from the head of corporate relations for Anglian Water, a Mr Jerry Dodd, who said, "We do accept stamps through the post". When I telephoned them about this, I was told that they don't!*

Anglian Water must benefit somehow by insisting that savings stamps must only be paid into the Post Office.

I also enclose for your perusal an Anglian Water Savings Stamp card. May I draw your attention to the printed statements on the back of the card? Quote: "When your bill is due, take with you to the Post Office a) your bill... b) your stamped savings card, c) any additional cash..." and more importantly "Please do not send or take your card to an Anglian Water office; take it to a Post Office" and just to make sure the saver has got the message, "Your bill will not be cleared until the stamps are actually 'paid in' at a Post Office."

faithfully,
TIM PARKER,

Lowestoft, Suffolk.

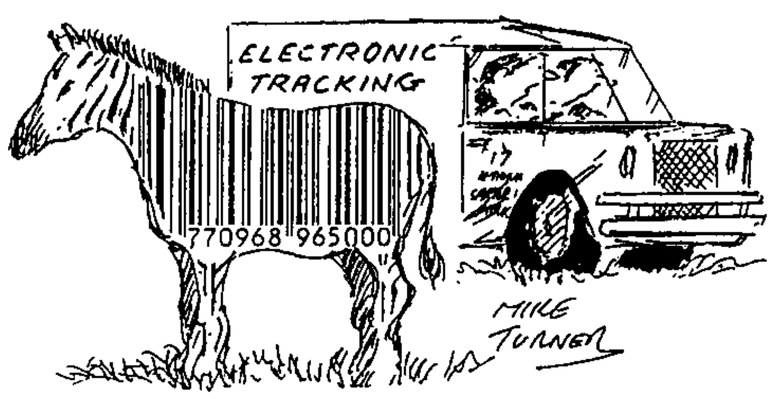
Opera buffoon

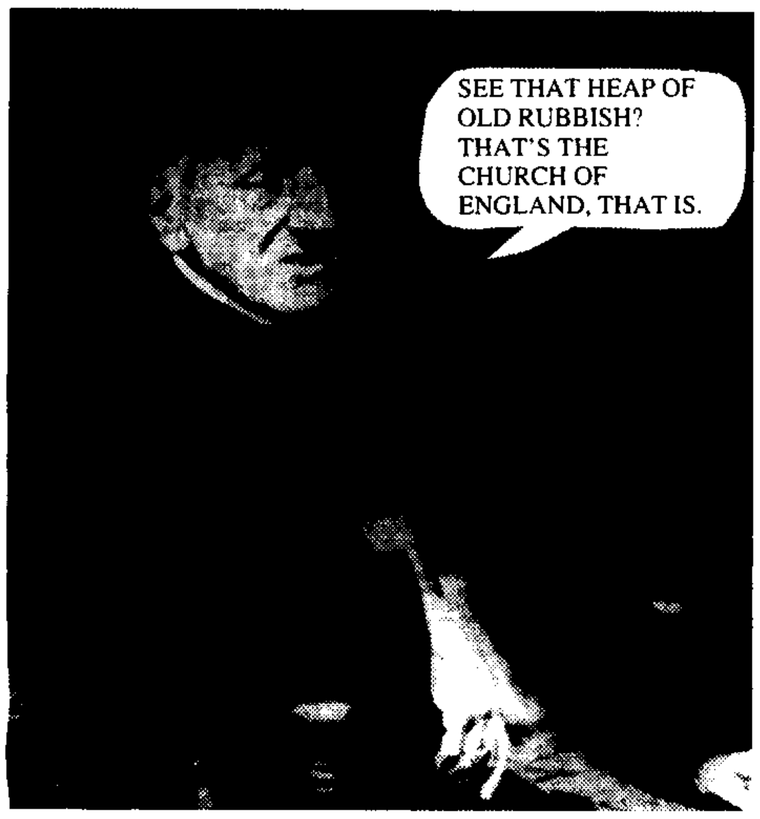
Sir,

How does Mr "Road Mad" McGregor expect his children to get to the "Orpera" once the nice shiny new roads he is forcing on the British countryside become as congested as the ones we already have? Simple. Like most Tories, he thinks his children will be able to buy their way out of future crises. Once the competition (railways) has been put out of business, drivers will mysteriously find more and more roads becoming "pay-as-you-drive". Anyone who votes for them knows what to expect — they'll always look after their own and force those who have least to subsidise the process.

faithfully,
L.M. WILSON,

York.





Cardinal Newman & Baddiel AUSTIN

Sick note

Sir,

For the last six weeks my hospital has not once been mentioned — still less defamed — in "Doing the Rounds". Why not, for Chrissake? Is your organ losing its grip?

faithfully,
P.V. SCOTT,

The Alexandra Hospital, Redditch, Worcs.

Singlehandedly

Sir,

Re. your request for video proof of the alleged Noel Edmunds BAYWATCH *episode. Sorry, you'll have as much trouble finding the footage of that as we did trying to find the tapes to substantiate the legendary "Fuck me till I fart" yarn about the female BBC newsreader.*

We first heard this story (presuming it's the same one about the NOEL'S HOUSE PARTY *film crew surprising a man privately pleasuring himself while watching the parade of beach 'n' babes on the box) a year ago while researching our second collection of "Urban Myths" (called* THE RETURN OF URBAN MYTHS, *published by Virgin at £4.99, as you ask...). However, the extra fruitiness of a celebrity as the main protagonist had yet to be stirred into the story at that time, and in our version the "hero" is unnamed.*

We imagine this is another in the long line of apocryphal tales emanating from the engineers at the BBC; one everyone swears is true, but for which no one has actually seen or heard the evidence. Could this be the work of the vengeful tongues of Auntie's "backroom boys" who for some strange reason begrudge TV "stars" their fame and fortune?

Kind regards,
RICK GLANVILL,
PHIL HEALEY,

London N4.

Another Repeat

Sir,

As a footnote to the great Baddiel & Newman debate, may I thank all the programme's many fans among your readership for taking the trouble to write in? I thought they and nice Mr Brown might like to know that the audience has now risen to 3.3 million — meaning that of all the sketch shows originated on BBC2 and C4 this year, it is the most popular. There, something else to get all worked up about.

faithfully,
HARRY THOMPSON,

Producer, NEWMAN & BADDIEL IN PIECES, *London W2.*

PS: Who is "Kipper Williams"?

The third man

Sir,

Back in the mid eighties as entertainments officer at a Cambridge college, I "hired" Messrs Baddiel, Newman and A.N. Other to perform in the bar during freshers' week. The one memorable skit was of two doddery history professors insulting each other.

Later to become "History Today" and generate trillions in sales of Baddiel and Newman videos, I always had the distinct impression that the sketch was the idea of the third member of the team. This third man — who incidentally got a starred first in, er, history — chose neither academia nor the stage. But has he received his royalties? I think we should be told.

faithfully,
JOHN GRIFFITHS,

Brussels.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Today is Reg Kray's birthday. Happy birthday, Reg. Not sure when his twin brother Ronnie's is, but best wishes to Ron anyway."
NICKY CAMPBELL, Radio 1
(Sean Flynn)

"Now? With McGarret breathing down my neck like a ton of bricks!"
HAWAII 5-0, BBC
(Richard Parsons)

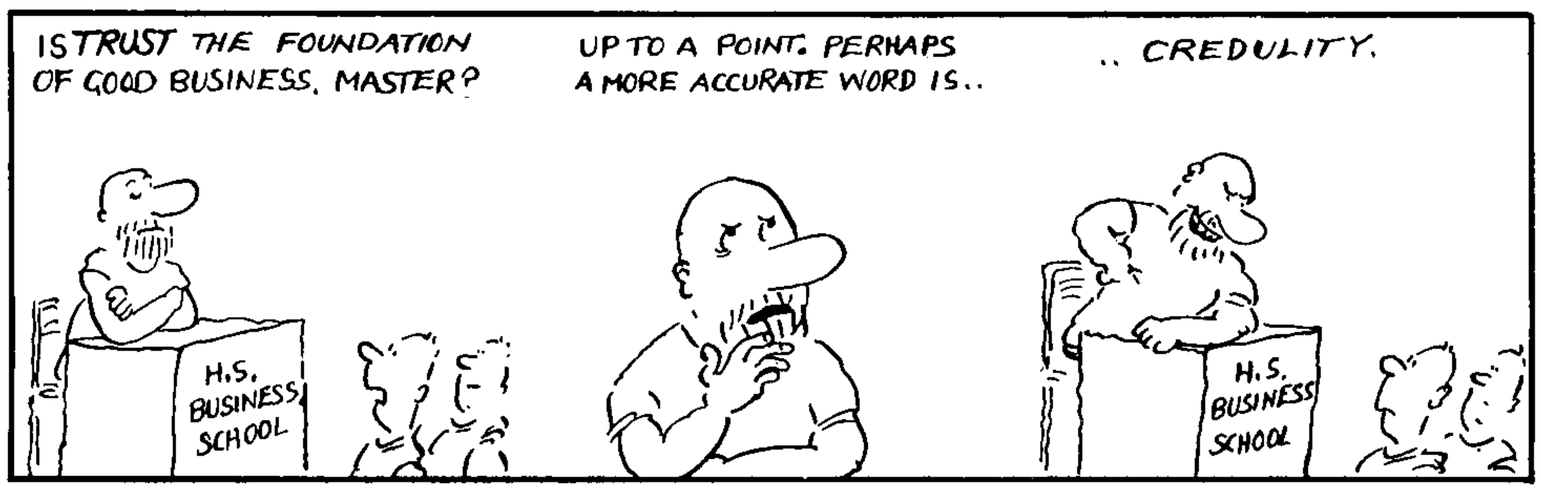
1st Commentator: *I know geography, of course I know geography. Ask me a question on geography.*
2nd Commentator: *Who was the 3rd President of the United States?*
Sky TV
(Philip Kayes)

"The window of opportunity will be blown completely out of the water."
GERALDINE KENNEDY, BBC1
(W. Pugh)

"It [Have I Got News For You] has a huge audience, which means quite a lot of people watch it."
IAN HISLOP, Classic FM
(John Muncey)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN


IS TRUST THE FOUNDATION OF GOOD BUSINESS, MASTER?
UP TO A POINT. PERHAPS A MORE ACCURATE WORD IS..
.. CREDULITY.
H.S. BUSINESS SCHOOL
H.S. BUSINESS SCHOOL

Letter from Angola

from Our Own Correspondent

AS THE United Nations security council debates the mandate of the UN mission here, there are some things its special representative in Luanda, Alioune Blondin Beye, might not want exposed to too close a scrutiny.

Mali's undistinguished former foreign minister touts his mid-October success at opening up the whole country — including the devastated city of Kuito — for humanitarian aid flights. But he may have problems explaining why, in Kuito for example, the UN distributes aid directly through the military on both sides. Strange indeed when on the rebel UNITA side of town there are no civilians.

The feeding up to a state of full military readiness of two warring armies may or may not qualify as humanitarian aid. But having passed resolution 864 which embargoed oil and weapons supplies to the rebels, the security council will be perplexed by some of the other priorities of its mission.

After 12 aid flights to Kuito, untrained medical personnel were still performing amputations without drugs or anaesthetic. The UN does, however, find space on its planes to deliver diesel to the rebels, sheepishly explaining that as a result of its embargo, UNITA says it has no fuel for trucks and this is the only way aid can be transported in rebel-held areas.

So the UN is breaking its own sanctions to ensure that two armies who have killed a quarter of a million people in the past 12 months are fed. Not that there's much concern in evidence at the main UN base in Luanda, replete with traditional contingent of whoring Scandinavian squaddies.

Nor does the misery of Angola's starving millions seem of much concern to UN technical support staff. Contract workers from Australia and New Zealand refer to "niggies, coons and blackies", while blessing their luck that New York rescued them from foreclosing mortgages with six-figure salaries.

While officials feign ignorance of such excess, they also fail to notice the interesting and certainly illegal agricultural activities of some UN personnel at the base. Neat fencing makes it difficult for anyone, as it were, to step on the grass.

If the security council chooses to explore its personnel problems in Luanda, it could start at the top. It is warming to see the beautiful and recently graduated daughter of the World Food Programme boss find, no doubt unaided, a position in the nearby UNICEF offices. But more warming still is to see her boyfriend (also fresh out of a British university) land himself, also no doubt on merit, a post with the World Food Programme.

If the food programme knows how to keep it in the family, it also knows how to have a good time. Envious of the UN military contingent which in places like Lubango "work" mornings only, WFP staffers must be proud of the two jet skis at their portside warehouse. Could they really be, as one official said, a crucial part of the UN's anti-theft harbour campaign?

Even the normally profligate European Commission is beginning to have doubts about aid policies. Having poured $40 million (three times our national health budget) into a high-tech Luanda hospital which may never open, it knows all about wasting money in Angola. But even the Euros blanche at signing blank cheques to the empire builders in Jan Eliasson's newly-created department of humanitarian assistance, hinting not just at the nepotism and incompetence, but at the corruption which follows.

All in all, Maitre Beye's report card is less than encouraging. Peace talks grind on hopelessly as the special representative reminds anyone who'll listen of what the Palestinians and Israelis achieved in Scandanavia. Meanwhile, the two demoralised conscript armies square up for ever more violent and pointless confrontation.

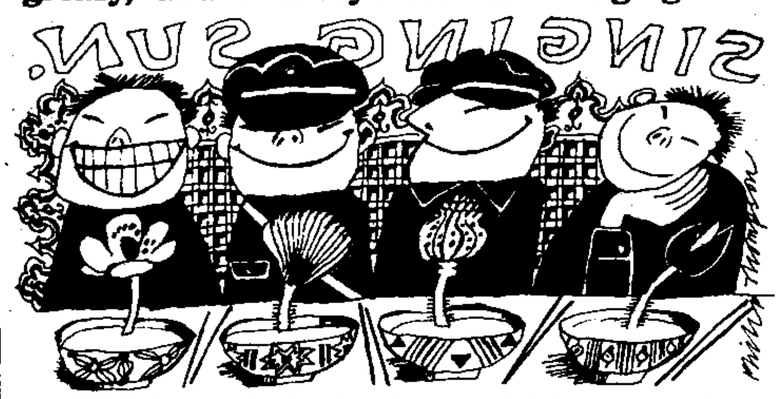
The malaise extends to the few UN staffers who can bear to think beyond their monthly cheques. Maitre Beye has already sacked the WFP's highly regarded but outspoken German-born Fritz Zander. Not far behind is regional information officer Mercedes Sagayuez, who provoked Beye's anger for providing... information.

Despite the catalogue of disasters, the one man who will probably keep his job is Maitre Beye himself. As the man from Mali is never too shy to admit, he counts among his good friends no less a patron than the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I first became suspicious when long queues began forming outside the Singing Sun restaurant hours before it opened," public health official Huang Shu-min told a Beijing district court. "And when the investigators we had sent there began joining the queue themselves on their days off, I knew the time had come for me to take swift action."

Huang Shu-min continued: "His squid with oyster sauce was the worst I have eaten in 37 years of public service, and yet I found myself booking lunch there every day for a fortnight." Another witness, Li Hao, concurred: "His donkey was tough, his sauces greasy, and I always left the Singing Sun



telling them their food tasted like dog's dirt. Yet somehow I always went back next day." Interrogated by health officials, Chen Tai-si, proprietor of the restaurant, eventually broke down and confessed how he managed to boos trade. "After somebody threw their dinner through the window, I decided to begin adding my special seasoning to every dish. Soon the customers were pouring in and begging for more."

Under analysis, the "special seasoning" turned out to be pure opium paste. Asking the court for leniency, Chen Tai-si declared: "They do such things as a matter of course in the West. I got the idea from a chef called Mrs Beeton. I was doing my countrymen a service. I am an innovator, not a criminal." He was sentenced to 23 years in prison for opium distribution. *(Weekly World News, 5/10/93. Spotter — Francis Harvey)*

— o —

o "Why don't you strap me securely to the operating table? I have a name for you, Doctor Neuberger," declared Roger Lavancier, while giving evidence to the High Court in Versailles. "It is Sparky the ten-thumbed moron."

Dr Philippe Neuberger was accused by Lavancier, 75, of having failed in his professional duty during an operation at a hospital in the Yvelines to remove an anal polyp. Prosecuting counsel M. Gerber told the court: "Dr Neuberger insisted on using a new technique of removal by electrocoagulation, claiming that it avoided bleeding. But, during the course of the operation, a spark from the electric scalpel ignited the residual methane gas in M. Lavancier's intestines. The force of the resulting explosion blew him clean off the operating table, causing him to collide with a trolley on which M. Bluare was being wheeled in for a routine vasectomy reversal. Both men sustained near-fatal injuries.

"My client has been 28% handicapped ever since, and is demanding FF950,000 in compensation. Worst of all, after the operation was over, his own doctor discovered that the polyp was still there. If that were not ironic enough, M. Bluare has since had to have his testicles removed." *(Nice Matin, 15/10/93. Spotter — Nigel Hawker)*

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Poll tax on wheels

"I DON'T anticipate charging much for this line," said the Fat Railman as he climbed aboard Ingrid the Inspection Saloon.

"Yes, it"s pretty quiet even in the rush hour," replied the Fat Controller.

"Actually, I'm more interested in the value of the infrastructure than in the passengers. A £50 track charge for each service would seem about right."

Meanwhile Thomas was backing up to Ingrid. "Who've we got here, then? Someone else who wants to close our line?"

"Sounded like it just now," replied Ingrid.

So Thomas worked up a terrific speed — faster than the track allowed in theory. "Hurry along, hurry along!" he called out as he reached 40 mph.

At the next station the Fat Controller climbed out. "What the hell are you doing, Thomas?" he hissed. "It's twenty from now on, do you hear?" Then he turned to the Fat Railman. "The rest of the track is so shabby we'll have to crawl along at twenty."

"Oh I don't know, sir," said Thomas. "The local authority upgraded some of the track last year."

"Now that's interesting," said the Fat Railman, returning to his seat. "Maybe £100 per service would be more appropriate."

Shortly Thomas drew up at another station. "No, Thomas, we're not scheduled to stop here," said the Fat Controller.

"I just wanted to show the gentleman how the county council has spent thousands of pounds on a new waiting shelter and platform surface. That's a vote of confidence in the future of our line."

"Fascinating," the Fat Railman muttered, reaching for his clipboard. "Let's say £120 then."

"Thomas, go and stand in that siding," said the

Fat Controller, his face twitching with exasperation. "Now, sir, let me explain. The local population paid for these improvements through the poll tax. If I have to increase the fares, they'll be paying twice for the same improvements."

"Really? Well you've made your bed, now you must pay to lie on it," laughed the Fat Railman.

"One other thing," Thomas called from his siding. "The council is about to spend £3 million on new signalling for the line."

"How convenient!" smiled the Fat Railman. "I'll set the track charge at £150."

"Shut up, Thomas!" screamed the Fat Controller.

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (21)

A FISHING-ROD REST

Holiday Inn – Advance Bookings Only

Bethlehem Star

Editor: Charles Myrrh

Now only 20 Shekels

Storm grows over lone mothers

by Frankincense Johnson

PHARISEES and politicians joined forces last night to condemn the wave of single parenthood which has been sweeping Bethlehem in recent days.

Ministers have linked the increase in so-called "lone mums" with the rising tide of crime which has lately been rocking Judaea.

"It is time to return to basic family values," said the Emperor Notveryaugustus (formerly Johannus Minimus) and he was strongly supported by his henchmen Pontius Portillo and Petrus Lillius.

Don't Consider The Lilley

One opponent of single motherhood went even further. Michael Herod, the Judaean Interior Minister, pointed to recent research which showed that all first-born children without fathers "lacked a proper role model" and would almost certainly "succumb to peer pressure" by becoming hardened criminals.

"My solution is simple," said Howard. "All first-born children should be slaughtered immediately and that will bring an end to crime."

Backing Mr Herod's call for tough action, the Pharisees stressed the importance of the two-parent family in both Jewish and Roman life.

They cited a particularly distressing example of a young unmarried mother who had actually come to Bethlehem in order to jump the queue for accommodation.

"She had come from her home in the country and was immediately given a stable of her own, complete with manger, swaddling clothes, oxen, asses and other benefits."

Blessed Are The Portillo

The Pharisees continued: "The moral character of this woman can be judged by the fact that in the days after her son was born, she entertained a continual stream of male visitors, ranging from rough shepherds to wealthy foreigners, some of them coloured, bringing exotic substances into the home."

Neighbours were deafened by the persistent playing of loud music, and light shows in the sky.

"How can we possibly expect a child brought up in such circumstances," the Pharisees concluded, "to grow up into a useful member of society? Mark our words, this youngster will end up on the wrong side of the law and no mistake. It would not surprise us to see him in 33 years time being nailed up."

ON OTHER PAGES

Should Zacharias and Elizabeth be allowed to have a child in their 50s? asks Saul Johnson. 2

Salome Bares All — Page 3 Special

The Locust and Wild Honey Diet — Wilderness Man Reveals His Way To Lose Pounds 24

Lazarus To Make ComeBack? See Star Sport

Great Bores Of Today.

"... he was the master of course no wonder the Italians revered him they take cinema seriously over there apparently they've been filing past his coffin literally in their thousands he was an artist in celluloid truly on a level with say er... Michelangelo or Picasso the early black and whites like *La Strada* which means you know er... it was magnificent I saw that when I was a student at the film club it had was it Silvana Minestrone in it she was incredible to look at wasn't she his wife? anyway it was ciné realité and I can still see it in my mind's eye this old man going down the street with a dog and the prostitute crying for the dead policeman amazing $8\frac{1}{2}$ on the other hand was a flawed masterpiece but it did bring him to a wider audience and it is the mark of a great genius that he can be both erudite and populist he had that ability to synthesise those elements in himself he was a storyteller in the old sense and they respected that can you imagine anyone here getting the sort of government funding that he got? we live in a completely philistine culture have you seen Mike Leigh's *Naked*? I agree with *Time Out*... it's searing..."

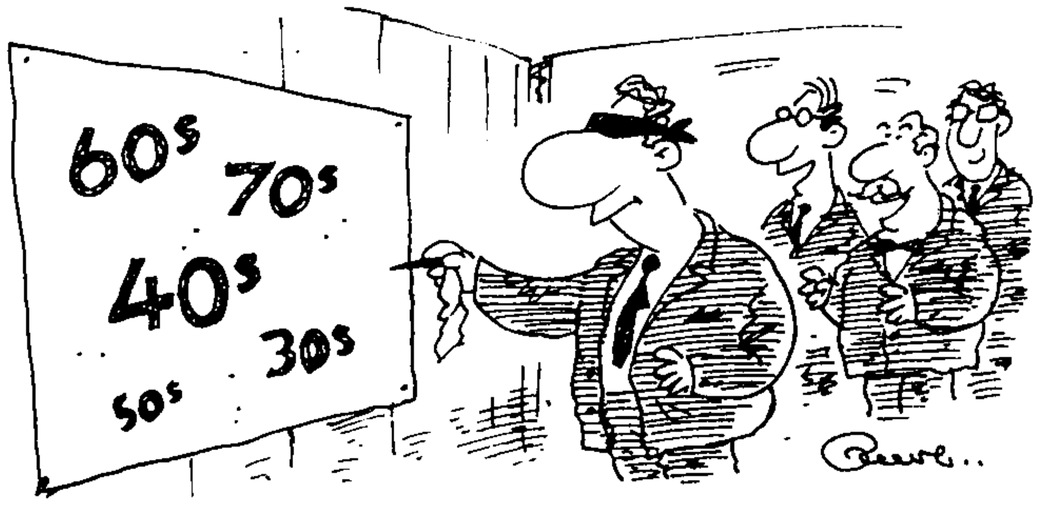
Reprinted from The Cakeian

Staff Changes — Lilley Term 1993

Mr P.J. Redditch (OC) is to join us this term to take charge of the Core Curriculum. He will take the Remove and the Lower Fifth for a Back to Basics Course. Mr Gradige, who trained at South Lambeth Polytechnic (now the University of Major At Brixton), is looking forward to taking up his new post which he says "will be quite a challenge". He will also coach Under-14 B League cricket. During his time in Thatcher's (1981-6), Mr Greyman represented the 3rd XI Colts on several occasions, his outstanding performance being an undefeated 11 against Merchant Kiplings in 1985, an innings which few who saw it will ever remember. He is a keen reader and among his favourite authors are Jeffrey Archer (OC).

● *The Cakeian writes: There is some dispute as to whether Mr Jeffrey Archer was indeed a Cakeian, as his Who's Who entry claims. When he first appeared in Who's Who in 1971, it was clearly stated that he attended "St Gummer's High School Yeovil". In 1976 his entry was changed to read "Oppidan Scholar Eton College School winner Victor Ludorum 1961-4". Any Old Cakeians who have personal recollections of a boy called Archer in the late 50s or early 60s are invited to write to the Editor, Mr A.J. Sadact (Dismal's 1951-3).*

TORY PARTY GAMES No. 94



PIN THE BLAME ON THE DECADE

HOWARD — 'I BLAME CHURCHILL FOR CRIME WAVE'

by Our Historical Staff **Prof. Norman Stoned**

IN AN astonishing outburst, the Home Secretary Mr Michael Howard last night claimed that the current crime wave could be laid squarely at the door of the late Sir Winston Churchill.

"If this madman had not started World War Two," he said, "millions of young men would not have had to desert their families to fight in the trenches.

"This meant a whole generation of mothers were left alone to bring up children who had no male role models and therefore no respect for the core values of family life.

"These were the lost generation who later, in the Sixties, tore down the fabric of civilisation with their iconoclasm, their free love and their anarchic grapefruit segments (*surely 'flared trousers'? — Ed.*)

"I am thinking," Mr Howard continued, "of men such as William Rees-Mogg, Geoffrey Wheatcroft, Max Hastings, Mary Archer, Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson and TV's Charles Moore."

After speaking to the nation from the Radio Car, Mr Howard was led away by men in white coats.

His condition was later described by the Prime Minister as "two parents short of a family".

BAD
BORING
BANAL
BALLSACHING
BURCHILL

The new bonkbuster from the bestselling author of AMBITION

OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK £4.99

NO GOOD

Available from Books Etc, Dillons, Waterstone's. W H Smith and bookshops everywhere.

DAILY Mirror

Friday, November 19, 1993 HONESTY, QUALITY, EXCELLENCE

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

SEXY DAVE IN SECRET PIX STORM

THIS is one of the sensational secret pictures the world is crying out not to see. It shows Mirror Editor David Banks sweating away on the publicity machine and losing thousands of pounds in the process.

Dave believes in keeping fat. He joined the exclusive Holborn Fatness Centre in a bid to improve his circulation and develop his figure (2.57 million and falling).

But we don't print this photograph merely out of prurience. It is not just an excuse to show photographs of a semi-naked fat man with his chequebook wide open.

We publish the Banks pictures for three very good reasons.

1) Firstly, out of deep love and respect for one of the finest editors on Fleet Street.

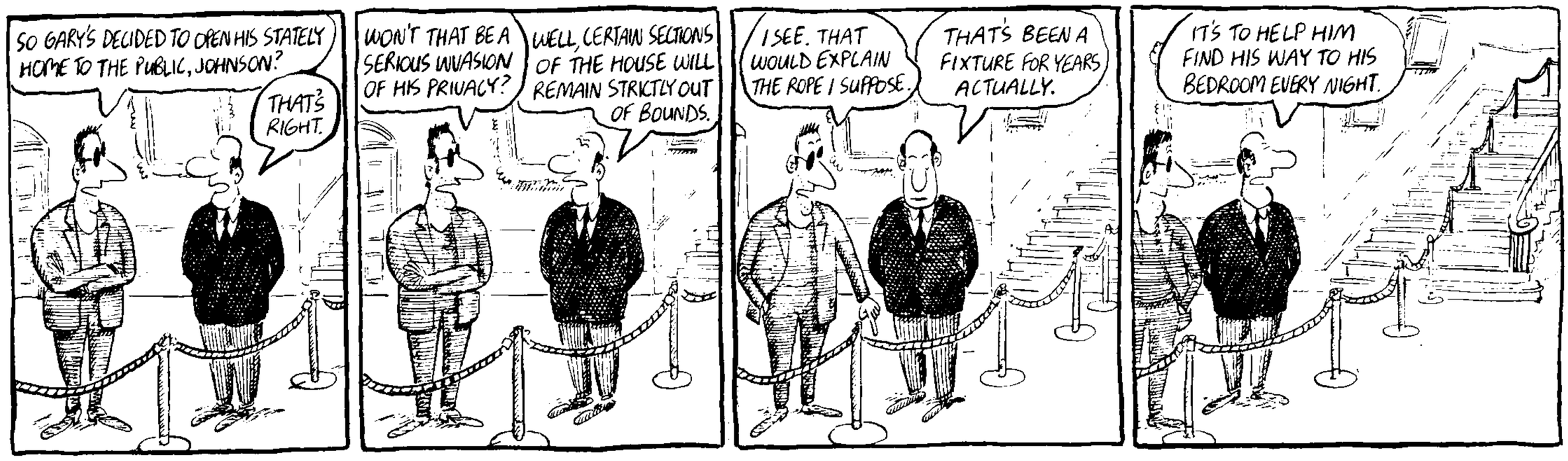
2) If that won't wash, how about: secondly, because the pictures prove at last that Mr Banks is *not* suffering from any slimming disease and is currently as enormously overweight as he ever was.

3) Er... well, OK, you didn't believe those two — but this reason is a cracker: the pictures highlight an issue of national security. Mr Banks edits a national whose future is far from secure.

WE SAY WE ♥ FATSO!

Celeb

LIGGER


SO GARY'S DECIDED TO OPEN HIS STATELY HOME TO THE PUBLIC, JOHNSON?
THAT'S RIGHT.
WON'T THAT BE A SERIOUS INVASION OF HIS PRIVACY?
WELL, CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE HOUSE WILL REMAIN STRICTLY OUT OF BOUNDS.
I SEE. THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE ROPE I SUPPOSE.
THAT'S BEEN A FIXTURE FOR YEARS ACTUALLY.
IT'S TO HELP HIM FIND HIS WAY TO HIS BEDROOM EVERY NIGHT.

The Daily Hellograph

A Time To Be Serious

A VISITOR from outer space might easily conclude from a study of the British press in recent days that the most important event on the entire surface of the globe was the publication by the Daily Mirror of a series of photographs showing the Princess of Wales engaged in aerobic exercises at a London gymnasium. How have we reached a situation where a happening of such essential triviality and miniscule import can be presented on every side as an occurrence of almost cosmic significance?

Day after day there is comment, analysis, reportage and pontification in an endless stream. And yet, while the attention of millions of readers is focussed on all the tedious ramifications of the so-called "Gymgate Affair", an infinitely more important and tragic event is unfolding in our country, and is receiving almost no attention from the Fourth Estate.

We refer, of course, to the outrageous treatment of Mr Jeremy Paxman at the hands of the anonymous "blackballers" of the Garrick Club. Surely this country and indeed our entire civilisation has reached the bottom of the pit when one of our most distinguished communicators can be treated like a social leper by the most important institution known to man. O Tempora, O Mores.

Also in today's Hellograph

Kate Moss models the Garrick Club tie 3

Secret pictures of Garrick members exercising in their club armchairs (exclusive) 4

I Name The Guilty Garrick Club 5 Who Snubbed TV's Jeremy by Peterbore 21

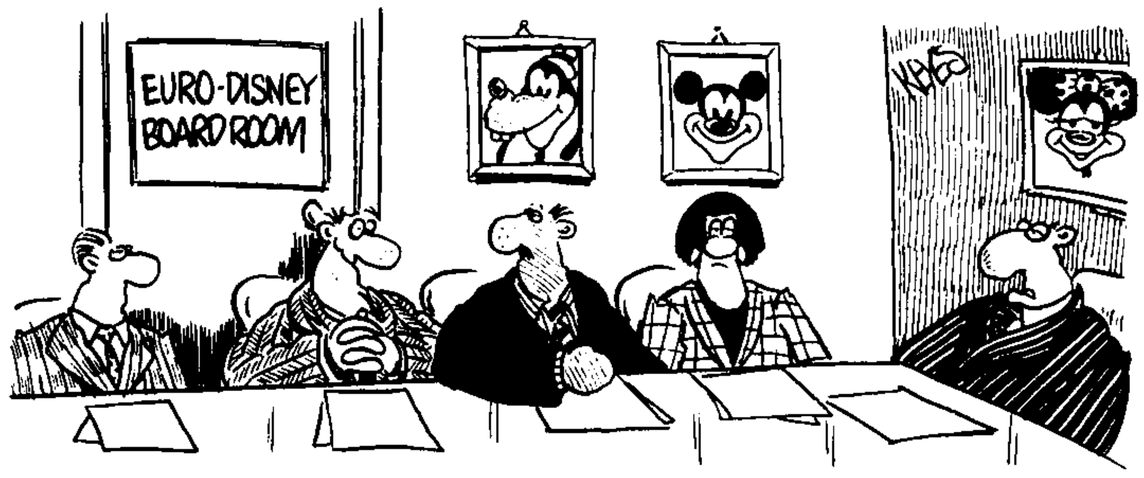
New Competition From The Marketing Department

Now you too can be put up for London's most exclusive club.

Just collect 84 tokens from the Daily Telegraph and complete the following sentence: I am giving up reading the Telegraph because it's full of rubbish about the Garrick Club .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....



"... thank you, Hodgkins. But I don't think we can rely on Tinkerbell to wave her magic wand at the naughty debt"

An Apology From Air Chief Marshal Sir Sopwith Bigglesworth DFC, Chief of the Air Staff

When I said last night that this chap Portillo was an absolute bounder who was trying to destroy everything that is best in this country, namely the Royal Air Force, I may have unwittingly given the impression that I was in some way seeking to be critical of Mr Portillo.

When I went on to say that he had put up that frightful little cad Brillo at the *Sunday Times* to produce a smear job on the RAF, and that this was the most dishonest piece of journalism I had ever read in my life, it might further have been taken that I was not wholly in agreement with the Government's Options for Change Policy with regard to its proposal to cut down the RAF to 2 Tiger Months, 1 parachute and 350,000 civil servants.

I now, however, realise, after a most enlightening five-minute meeting with Sir Kenneth Mildew, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Armed Forces, that I was in imminent danger of being sacked unless I grovelled immediately on all points.

I would like therefore to make it clear that I have total confidence in Mr Portillo, Mr Clarke, Mr Major and every single one of those 350,000 civil servants at the Ministry of the Armed Forces who have mounted such a gallant and heroic defence against the threat of this country having an air force.

(You're fired. Sir K.M.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Sir Herbert Gussett

SIR—Your readers may like to know that here in the remote corner of the West Country, there has only been one topic of conversation in recent days. Was it right for the members of the Garrick Club to "blackball" the noted television performer Mr Jeremy Beadle? It would be hard to convey the intense passions aroused by the news of this dastardly "stab in the back" to one of our best-loved TV "personalities", someone who in recent years has become as intimate a part of the warp and woof of our daily life as our Vicar, the Rev. Purvis, joint incumbent of the united benefices of Ashdown Parva, Kington St Miles and Lower Bottomley.

There are those, albeit no more than a handful (i.e. my lady wife, whose name after so many years eludes me), who believe that Mr Paxman is so lacking in the ordinary civilities as to pose a threat to those core values upon which our nation depends for its very survival, and that the Garrick Club has struck a vital blow for civilisation in banning him from its portals. There are others, such as myself, who have been so outraged by this unwarranted insult to a very great man that last evening we convened an Extraordinary General Meeting of the newly-formed Gussett Club at which a vote was carried nem. con. to invite Mr Paxman to become an Honorary Lifetime Member. This great honour will entitle the doughty gladiator of the small screen to come down from London at any time to enjoy the full facilities of our club, at normal bar prices. He would in addition be very welcome to bring his good lady, should she wish to grace our annual Ladies Night. A minute to this effect was drawn up:

The Gussett Club

Hon. Patron in Chief for Life (invited): Her Majesty the Queen Mother.

Chairman: Sir H. Gussett.

Vice-Chairman and Membership Secretary: B. Frobisher.

Treasurer and Chairman of Wine Committee: N. Balon.

Let me assure Mr Jeremy Thorpe that the facilities of our club will make the so-called sophisticated delights of the Garrick Club pale into insignificance.

One has only to contemplate the proposed menu for our New Members Night to see what incomparable fare lies in store for Mr Parsons.

Starters: 1 case "Beast of Exmoor" Somerset Whisky ("a wee dram afore ye pass away")

1 packet Combe Florey Bat Cracklings

1 packet "Taskforce" Extra Strong Mints

Yours faithfully
H. GUSSETT
Dunblackballin
Sinden Mortimer
Dorset

WACKO JACKO TO CUT DOWN ON ADDICTION

by Our Medical Team
Dr Neur O'Fen FRCS (Dublin)

THE POPULAR singing star Michael Jackson has announced that he is to reduce his dependence on large daily doses of money from Pepsi Cola.

Pep Pills

A spokesman for Mr Jackson, who was last night seeking refuge in a clinic patronised by the likes of Mr Elton John, Mr Ben Elton, Mr Tony Benn, Mr Elton Belton and Mr Ben Jonson *(shurely several mistakes? Ed)*, said: "Michael used to take Pepsi Cola's money in very large quantities. Sometimes £10 million a year. Now he has decided to reduce this intake to nothing at all. The method he has chosen is very new and very brave and is called Being-sacked-after-the-bad-publicity-concerning - possible - child-abuse."

Mr Wackson is 35.

Poetry Corner

Lines on the Retirement of D.I. Gower from First Class Cricket

So, Farewell
Then.

David Gower.

You are too
Old to
Play cricket

For England.

And too
Good.

A Nation
Mourns.

E.J. Thribb 17½ (Retired)

This poem by E.J. Thribb has been shortlisted for the Pipesucker Prize (£10.25p) and comes from his latest collection, "More Dead Leaves". Thribb hopes it is sufficiently bad to be reprinted in the *Independent*.

TV Highlights

C4 **J'Accuse**

Leonardo attacks Brian Sewell

OUTSPOKEN gay Renaissance painter Leonardo looks at the reputation of Brian R. Sewell and concludes he is overrated, talentless and "a friend of Sir Anthony Blunt" *(surely 'Dorothy'? Ed)*.

NEW VIDEO RELEASES by Tristan Shout

Get Rich The Di Way!

SquidgieVid £17.99

DIANA goes into seedy premises in London's Lincoln Inn where she exercises her right to sue the *Daily Mirror* for breach of confidence. The club, run by a Mr Mishcon, a former associate of Mr Robert Maxwell, specialises in making people rich. "We start gradually with a simple writ," he explains to Diana, "and then we introduce certain more specialised routines. The affidavit, the injunction, the exemplary damages."

Diana then learns how, after a few months, this leads to a full three or four day High Court Hearing, which demands "Real Stamina".

Mishcon, wearing the obligatory striped work-out suit, concludes "At my place, we go for the money to burn technique".

Rating: ✶✶✶✶

LIZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
SNOW WHITE!
MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE CEILIN', TELLT US WHICH POSE YOU FIND MOST APPEALIN'!
SNAP!
CLICK!
PAT!
TEND!
LIKES TO TRAVEL AN' MEET PEOPLE
MAKE UP
LET'S GO FOR THE BURN EVERYONE!
BLEAH! IT'S A BASTAAD OOTRAGE!
BLEAH! AYE! NONE O' TH' PAPERS'D PRINT SNAPS O' ME!
GURGLE!
THE DAILY SNIFFA
PUMP THOSE DAMAGES!
AH HED ME AN EXERCISE BIKE BURRIT TOOK A LOT O' MAINTENANCE!
AH'M GONNA DABBLE AT TV!
YA BIG GIRL'S BLOUSE!
LOW GRADE
AMATEUR STAGE
ED TO BE A PRODUCER
DARLING SWEETY LUVVY
SUPER DARLING
WHY NOT? WOR FAMILY NEVER PRODUCED ANYTHIN' BEFORE!
IN PARLIAMENT...
NOO LISSEN YA SPAWNY GETS! IF IT'S A PAY RISE FER ONE SET A GREEDY IDLE BASTAADS IT'S A PAY RISE FORRUS AAL!!
MYAH MYAH!
SEE YOU IN THE BAR OLD CHAP
...THEY'RE ALL AFTER ME, THE BASTARDS... GAGA... GOOGOO...
MURMUR MURMUR
CHAT CHAT
AN' DENY TH' OXYGEN A PUBLICITY TA AAL SICK BASTAADS!
PRIVACY BILL

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

Today is a very historic day for the people of Ulster. I am launching a new initiative which will bring an end to the violence and create peace in what Mr Hurd has told me to call "that unhappy land". After all, everyone wants peace, except for the people who don't. And that is why I have begun my initiative by inviting all the people who want peace to come to see me.

The first one to knock at my door this morning was a very large man called Dr Paisley. He is not a doctor at all, but a vicar, which is not inconsiderably confusing.

"As a man of God," I said, "you must be in favour of peace."

"No," he bellowed, and produced a piece of paper which he said was his own solution to all the problems of Northern Ireland. He then read it out in a very loud voice, which made all the biros vibrate on my desk.

"Point One," he began. "No Surrender. Point Two. Now or ever. Point Three. That's it."

He then stormed out, slamming the door so hard that all the biros fell off my desk, and I had to spend 10 minutes picking them up.

I was still on the floor, looking for the one which Chancellor Kohl gave me to celebrate the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty with "Deutschland Über Alles" written on it, when a Mr Molyneaux came in.

"It's alright, prime minister," he said, "there's no need to kneel. We'll support you on rail privatisation as long as you support us over Clause 2."

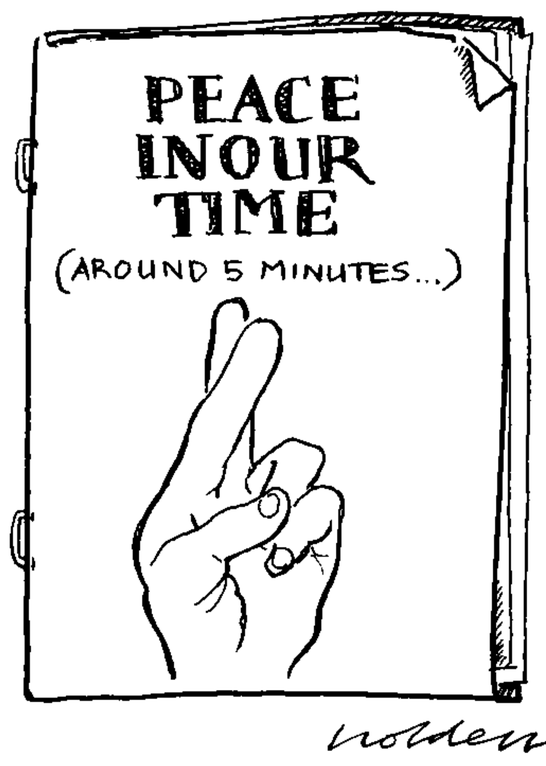
"What are you talking about?" I asked him. But he had already pulled out several pieces of paper which he said were "The Official Unionist Response To The Search For A Proposal To Bring Peace To Northern Ireland". He began reading this out in a low droning voice, which I am pleased to say did not seem to affect the biros on my desk at all.

"Point One," he began. "We in the Official Unionist Party would like to make it plain that any surrender would be unacceptable to us. Point Two. This surrender would remain unacceptable to us now or at any point in time in the future. Point Three. That is most certainly it, with regard to this one."

I was in no small measure encouraged to hear him. Already I have got two of the main parties agreeing and it cannot be long now before a permanent settlement is reached.

Tuesday

Today my top-level search for peace in Northern Ireland continued, when another man came to see me called Mr Hume. I had taken the precaution of putting all my biros in the top right-hand drawer where I keep my 'Bastards' books, in case he should



shout at me. But I needn't have bothered. He spoke very quietly and asked if he could read out to me a piece of paper.

"This is the Hume-Adams Plan," he said, "and it will bring complete peace to Northern Ireland in five minutes."

At the mention of the word Adams the door burst open and Mr Hurd came in wearing a balaclava. "Hold it, prime minister," he said. "This plan can only be read out by an actor."

Unfortunately there were no actors in the room, so we had to ask Mr Hume to go away.

Wednesday

Today I had a complete break from my very tiring search for peace in Ulster, when my wife Norman and I were allowed to be the first to see a special new painting of myself by a very famous Irish painter whose name I cannot at the moment recall. The picture showed me standing in front of my library — i.e. the Complete Encyclopaedia of Useful World Facts, which I bought from a very persuasive gentleman who came to our door in Huntingdon. Plus all my Wisdens (1957-date, except 1968, which was borrowed by my ex-friend David Mellor and never returned). Plus my complete set of signed Jeffrey Archer novels which he tells me "will one day be a superb investment". Funnily enough these are exactly the same words as those used by the man who sold me my encyclopaedias.

When I asked Norman what she thought of my picture, she said: "Well, John, it is very lifeless. It looks just like you."

In the evening Norman and I settled down with our M&S Salmon and Coriander Tikka with some funny bread-like pancakes to watch the programme I have been looking forward to for weeks, the one about how they threw out Mrs Thatcher and chose me instead. "Why doesn't anything on TV have a happy ending any more?" Norman asked, leaving the room. But I enjoyed it very much indeed, especially the bit where Mrs Thatcher complimented me by saying that I was "a consensus man". This means apparently that everyone agreed that I was the best man for the job, which is quite right. At last Mrs Thatcher has said something which doesn't make her look stupid.

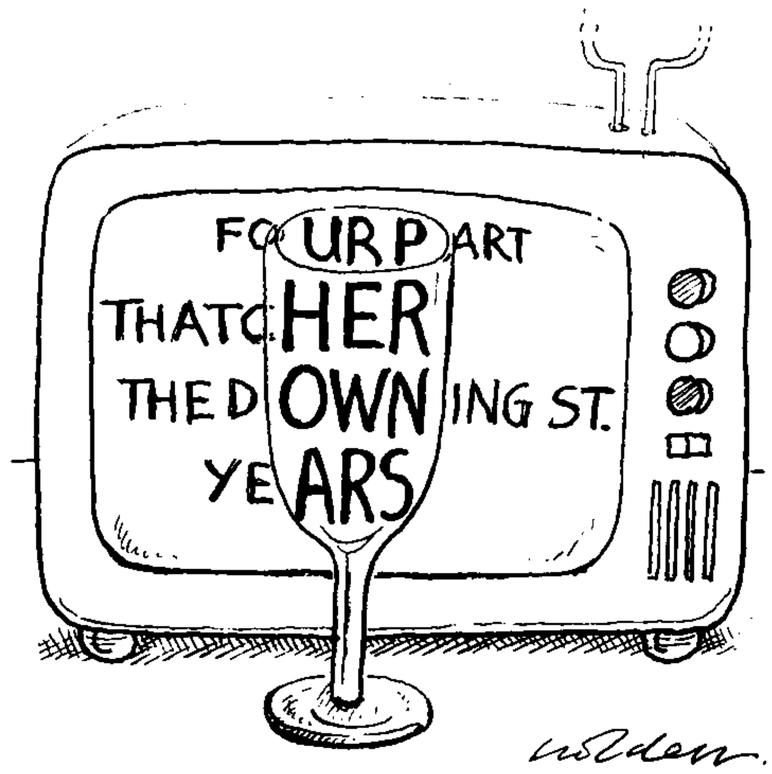
Thursday

Having solved the Irish problem, I today launched an even more historic initiative which I have decided to call "Back to Basics". This will certainly show people like Mr Lilley and Mr Portfolio who is doing the original thinking around here. This is the plan which I wrote out in my new 'Back to Basics' book. At the moment I have only got the title, but I will fill in the rest when I have time.

At our Cabinet meeting I launched the idea, and I told them all — especially Mr Lilley and Mr Portfolio — that whenever they made a speech, they were to be sure to mention the need to "get back to basics".

"But what does that mean?" Mr Waldegrave asked, when he brought in the tea.

"It means exactly what it says," I told him in my sternest Dixon of Dock



Green voice. "If we get back to basics then we will be getting back to basics, which is what everyone wants."

They all kept very quiet for some minutes after my charismatic outburst. I noticed that Mr Clarke for some reason kept on writing the number 10 on his notepad (which Sir Robin Butler puts out before out meetings, with a biro next to it).

Mr Gummer eventually asked, on a point of order, why our morning biscuits were now plain and not chocolate-covered as per usual. Mr Waldegrave explained that it was part of a cost-cutting exercise to slash Government spending. He said that he had set up a special new 10-man team to cut down Whitehall waste, and, after a three-month consultation exercise, it had been decided to introduce a cheaper type of biscuit. Tenders had been invited from all the major European biscuit manufacturers and a provisional bid had been accepted from the Danskbik Company of Elsinore, to supply Morning Biscuits. But the decision would be kept under constant review by a 20-man monitoring unit in the Department of Trade and Industry. Who said that my government doesn't get things done?

Friday

I have a new name to put in my 'Bastards' book, i.e. Mr Edward Heath, who used to be my friend when he attacked Mrs Thatcher. Now he has attacked me for attacking single parents! What does he know about it? He is not even a single parent. He is no parent at all. Oh no. Sometimes Mrs Thatcher was right about people.

Mr Meyer, who took over from my friend Mr O'Donnell, brought in my newspaper this morning (the Sun) which tells me what to do. It says that Mrs Thatcher is now going to be in the Cabinet. I wonder if it is true.

Saturday

Mr Richard Body has now been taken out of my 'Loonies' book because he has decided not to resign and force a by-election. When I told my wife Norman that he was going to support me, she said: "Then you should put him back in the book." Politics is sometimes very difficult for a woman to understand, unless she is Mrs Bottomley. Oh yes.

Monday

Everyone is talking about my new "Back to Basics" campaign. Even Her Majesty the Queen remarked on it when I was going over her speech at our weekly meeting! She has a marvellous sense of humour. "I can see why you are so interested in the basics," she said, giving me one of her smiles. "Why is that Ma'am (which is how you have to talk to the Queen)?" I asked.

"Because you are basically useless," she laughed.

Stop this madness

by Our Editor in Chief Sir Hitler Hastings

IT WAS over seven years ago that Britain thrilled to the most heroic invasion of modern times.

A tiny group of highly-trained hacks seized control of the *Daily Telegraph* in a brilliant operation which lasted only 10 minutes.

Of course there were casualties. Hundreds of hacks lost their jobs. But now a new book has been published alleging that the victorious Blackforce broke the NUJ Convention by treating the losers with "astonishing barbarity".

"I saw one senior officer — let us call him MH — personally cutting off the ears of an unarmed crossword compiler and pushing him out of a fourth-floor window."

Now there is a clamour to put our heroes on trial. But we say — what good will it do to dig up these long-forgotten events? It will not bring the victims back. Takeover battles are a bloody business. Make no mistake. Let sleeping Isle of Dogs lie.

The Daily Telegraph Roll of Honour

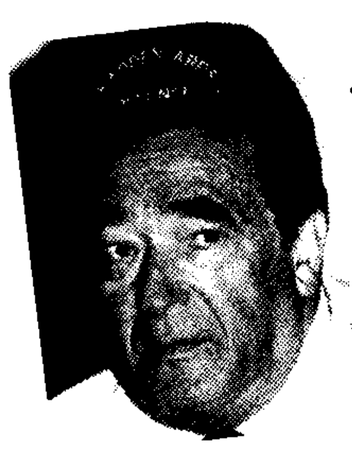
Brig. "Sir" Conrad "Connie" Black. "Nothing is to be gained from raking over the past, except the £400 million I have gained since taking over the Telegraph."

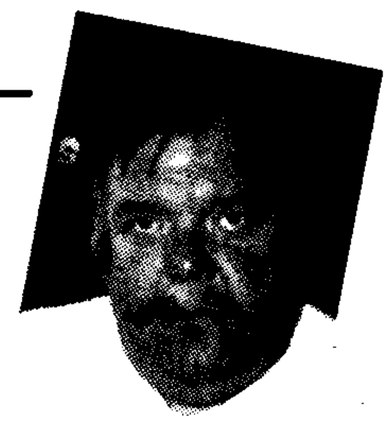
TV's Charles Moore. "It was all a long time ago. I wasn't even born at that time."

General Sir "Mad Max" Hastings. "Cutting off the ears of crossword compilers has long been a central part of Britain's military tradition."

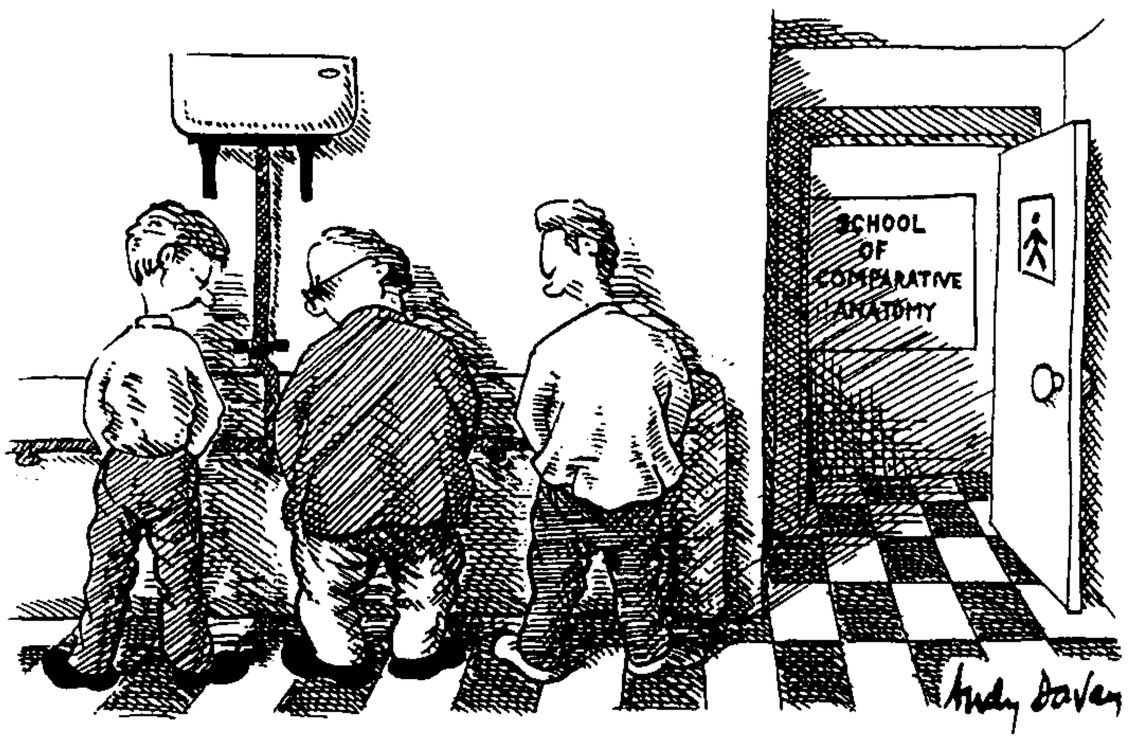
Private "Perry" Worsthorne. "In the heat of battle one can easily forget that one is a member of the Garrick Club."

Progress





1991: Mirror run by Fat Idiot. **1992:** Mirror run by Banks. **1993:** Mirror run by Fat Idiot called Banks.



EDWARD SETS UP AS INDEPENDENT TEA PRODUCER

(shurely 'TV'? Ed)

by Our Media Staff **P.G. Tips**

THE WORLD of hot beverages *(shurely 'television'? Ed)* was rocked to its foundations yesterday by the news that Prince Edward, the fifth in line to the throne of England, is to create his own independent company which will produce highbrow tea *(shurely 'TV programmes including factual current affairs and arts documentaries'? Ed)* for sale to the network.

Prince Edward brings a wide range of technical knowledge to his new job, having produced a large amount of tea *(don't you mean 'theatre'? Ed)* for Andrew Lloyd Webber at the Really Useful Company, getting rave reviews such as "Mmm", "Oooh", and "Delicious" in his brief time there.

Said a spokesman: "He's got a very good eye for a cuppa and his years of experience stirring, adding milk and disposing of unwanted teabags will be a real plus in the future." Said another: "He has always been interested in variety: Earl Grey, Lapsang Souchong, Ceylon, Breakfast Mix — even mint tea. There's very little, tea-wise, that Edward can't turn his hand to."

Edward will eschew any formal titles at the new company, and will be known simply as "Boy".

(That's quite enough of this piece. Ed.)

Owing to an editing error, Hugo Young's column yesterday described Michael Portillo as "a conman of a different order of seriousness and coherence from any of his rivals". What Hugo Young wrote was that Portillo is "In command of a different order of seriousness". We apologise to both.

Grauniad

The girls from SLGS joined students from France, Belgium and Germany in a series of discussions on European issues, culminating in a full blow session of the mock European Council.

Press release. Simon Langton Girls School

HAVE YOU GOT MR MAJOR'S CORE VALUES?

10 Telltale Signs

1 Do you love old Fifties films such as *Kind Hearts and CORonets?*

2 Do you remember watching the CORonation on your black and white television?

3 Do you say "COR" when you see a pretty girl?

4 Did you enjoy being in the CORPS (OTC or CCF) at school?

5 Do you eat an apple right down to the CORE because you remember rationing?

6 Do you believe that CORporal punishment is the only language these young offenders understand, because it never did you any harm?

7 Do you think the BBC has gone to pot ever since they abolished CHORal evensong?

8 Do you think *Punch* has been no good ever since Alan COREn left?

9 Do you wish you'd been there when Len Hutton was CAUght Hasset bowled O'Reilly for 364?

13 Do you call a pretty girl a CORker?

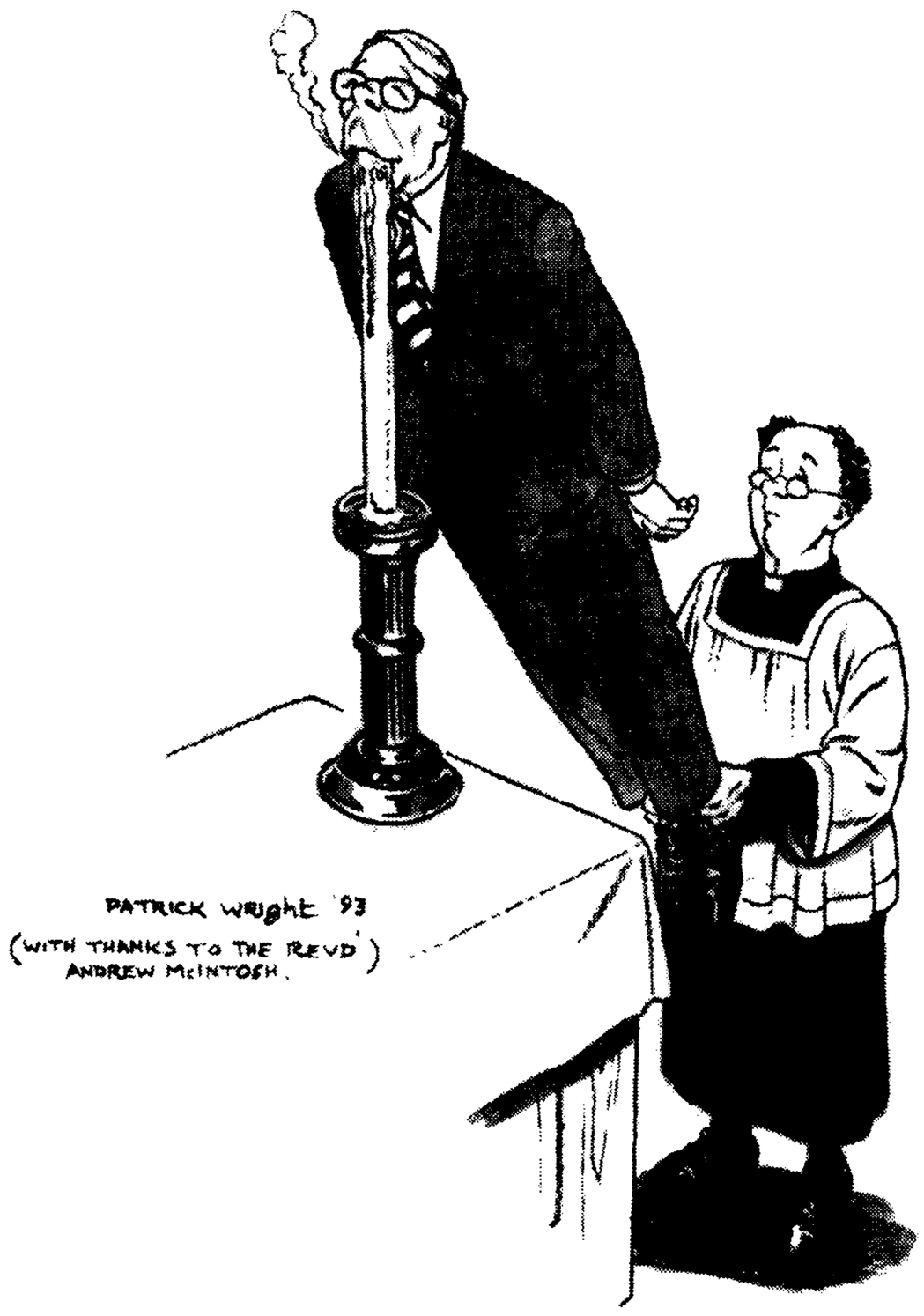
12 Do you think Simon COURtland is a jolly good writer in the *Field* and still ought to be the editor?

11 Do you think there are no Brave New CAUses left?

10 Do you believe the CORE curriculum is too easy and is the main reason why youngsters today cannot spell or count up to 10?

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (22)

A CANDLE SNUFFER



CHARLES OF ARABIA

THE STORY SO FAR: The Prince of Wales has flown to Kuwait as part of his mission to rebuild his public image.

Now read on...

CHARLES'S camel snorted furiously as the Royal Party neared the crest of Shawaddi Waddi, the great sand dune from where they could see the ancient tomb of Princess Al Lin Baba, the wisest and most beautiful of the daughters of the Wazir of Strobes.

"Hold her firm, Your Highness," instructed the trusty camelman Sharif. "The camel she is like a beautiful woman. You must always show her who is in control."

How true that was, Charles thought, how very true when you thought about it. If only he had kept a tighter rein on Diana then perhaps everything would not have been so appalling. Because it really was appalling when you thought about it. But there was no point in dwelling on the past. As his old friend and mentor, Sir Laurens van der Post had put it in his book *I Did It My Way: Travels Through Life*: "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile."

How very true that was as well. Everything seemed so true here in the pure air of the desert.

He drew alongside the Exxon of Kuwait who smiled, revealing his white and gold teeth. "Yes, my brother, the desert, she is like a beautiful woman. She stretches out before us with her valleys and dunes asking us to explore her."

"Yes, indeed," said Charles as the Exxon nudged him in the ribs with his white rhino horn camel whip. What an impressive figure the Exxon was, he thought, with his ornate Bedouin headdress and single-breasted silk Yamani suit. He was the epitome, thought Charles, of the modern monarch, combining the traditions of a noble past with a command of the contemporary world. Sunglasses and camels. Rolex watch and abacus. Yes! This would be himself before long, he decided, in his new incarnation. The gutter press trivialities would be forgotten, Diana would be confined to the sidelines and, like the Exxon, he, Charles, would rescue his country and become a symbol of unity between all the warring thingies and so on. He could see it all...

After they had travelled a few more miles, the Exxon asked: "Would you like to fly my kestrel? Her name is Squijji."

"Er... Yes... Thank you," said Charles, gingerly holding out his arm as the Exxon expertly placed a magnificent hooded bird onto his wrist. The creature immediately sank her talons deep into Charles's Reeves and Mortimer tropical jacket. He let out an involuntary cry of pain. The Exxon smiled: "The kestrel is like a beautiful woman. You must put a bag over head to keep her quiet."

Charles felt that this was rather less true than some of the other things the Exxon had said, but he nodded vigorously nonetheless.

The faithful Sharif removed the leather hood from the bird and at once the kestrel flew off into the azure blue, never to be seen again.

THE picnic lunch at the Salman Oasis lived up to Charles's expectations. As they walked through the luscious gardens where tinkling fountains played and palm trees extended their fronds to create an Elysian shade, a sumptuous banquet had been prepared for the party of thirty princes. In the middle of a ceremonial Asilnadir rug sat a huge plate groaning with sheep's eyes. The Exxon invited him to begin.

"You are hungry, Your Highness. This is our finest Arab delicacy."

Charles forced himself to swallow the glutinous mass that had once graced the visage of a proud desert ram.

"Are you not joining me, Your Highness?" Charles gulped as he noticed that the Exxon was not eating.

"Oh no. They are all for you. I will have a Big Mac later, at the Palace. I find that food is like a beautiful woman. You have to wait a bit and then she comes out nice and hot..."

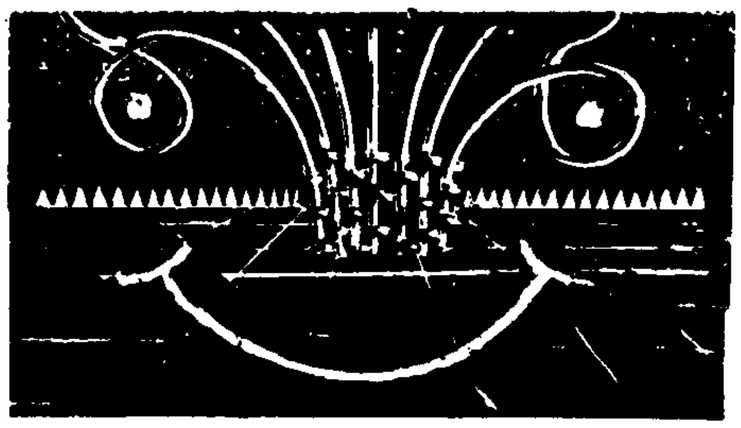
The other princes squatting in a circle along with Charles all nodded, but then the mood seemed to change from one of proverbial wisdom to what Charles could only describe as lewd gaiety. He was amazed to see a copy of the *Sunday Mirror* being passed avidly between the princelings. And there was Prince Fatwa thrusting his clenched fist in the air to the accompaniment of lascivious grunts. At once he saw, spreadeagled across the front page of the paper, his estranged wife, clad only in a leotard.

The Exxon handed Charles the paper and sniggered. "Your wife, she is like a beautiful woman..."

Charles suddenly felt his lunch churning in his stomach. Was there no length to which Diana would not go to keep herself in the public eye? The very thought of the word 'eye' made him feel even more nauseous. And, clutching his stomach, he ran behind the nearest palm tree, leaving behind the mocking laughter of the sons of the desert.

(To be continued)

DIARY



MALCOLM BRADBURY

There are a tremendous number of very exciting new developments in post-war English literature going on, both direct and indirect, conceptual and deconceptual, bourgeois and anti-bourgeois, rential, ferential, referential, self-referential, self-drive car-rental, post-humanism, post-modernism, post-prandial and post-office.

Kingsley Amis's most recent novel, *Same Old Stuff* (225pp) provides a, to me, essential example of an exciting new development in the interplay of moral ambiguity and post-ideological fragmentation in this profoundly serious though notionally — and instinctively — "comic" writer. From the very first sentence:

Bill farted.

the reader is plunged into a very real world of deep inner movement, a world in flux, where the uncertainties of a questioning moral universe are emitted in an outburst of profound turmoil from a nether world of startling fecundity. We are in an area of physical and social displacement, and it is an area from which the characters surrounding the central figure, Bill, feel themselves alienated, as they dive for the obviously symbolic "open window". And how should one judge the novel as a whole? For me, it is not since his last novel that Kingsley has written a book more powerfully similar to his next.

Every ten years we can be said, in a very real sense, to enter upon a new decade. The Nineties seem to me to be very much the continuation of the Eighties, though, then again, in some sense they are even more recent in that they are "with us now", just as the Seventies are more recent than the Sixties — though of course less recent than the Eighties, which are themselves widely judged to have been supplanted by the Nineties. If we are to deconstruct these four decades, then we can say with a confidence tinged with insecurity that the Sixties was a decade of uncertainty and change, the Seventies bore witness to both change and uncertainty, and that a deep mood of uncertainty and change characterised the Eighties; meanwhile the Nineties are best characterised by a prevailing ethos of almost tangible change and uncertainty. And it seems to me in a profoundly moral sense to be the responsibility of the novelist in these changing, uncertain times to sit on late night television panels, pipe at hand, to deliver an overview.

And what conclusion will he reach? To refer briefly to my own critico-contemporanaeo-historical corpus, *The Modern British Novel* ('79), *The Novel in Modern Britain* ('87), *Modern Britain in the Novel* ('82) and *Modern British Novel, The* ('93), I believe that the most vital purposes of the modern novel must lie in its ability to provide any student of the subject with a very real insight into the most vital purpose of the modern novel.

Invited onto BBC Television's prestigious *Pebble Mill* discussion forum to offer a brief overview of the highly contemporary problem "Whither Madonna?", I lit my pipe and gave it as my considered opinion that Madonna, living through a post-holocaust, post-humanist, post-houseforte age, seems, in a curious way, to embody the fragmentation of society in collapse, and in so doing had much in common with the modern British novel, multi-faceted, multi-cultural, multi-layered, multi-storeyed.

"So what you're saying, Malcolm, correct me if I'm wrong," said the presenter, "is that she's pretty hot stuff?"

I took a good, long puff of my pipe. "If the writing of fiction is a complex technical inquiry into all the strategic relations of language — of subject-object relations, angles of vision, the formation and decomposition of predictable codes, then the development of that inquiry has been much advanced, for me at any rate, by the elaborate lore now commonplace within the contemporary avenues of the multi-media spectacle, of which Madonna is an obvious part," I replied.

"So the Prof thinks Madonna isn't really his type — at least I think that's what he's trying to say, viewers!" said the presenter. "And now it's over to Alan for this week's Gardening Tips."

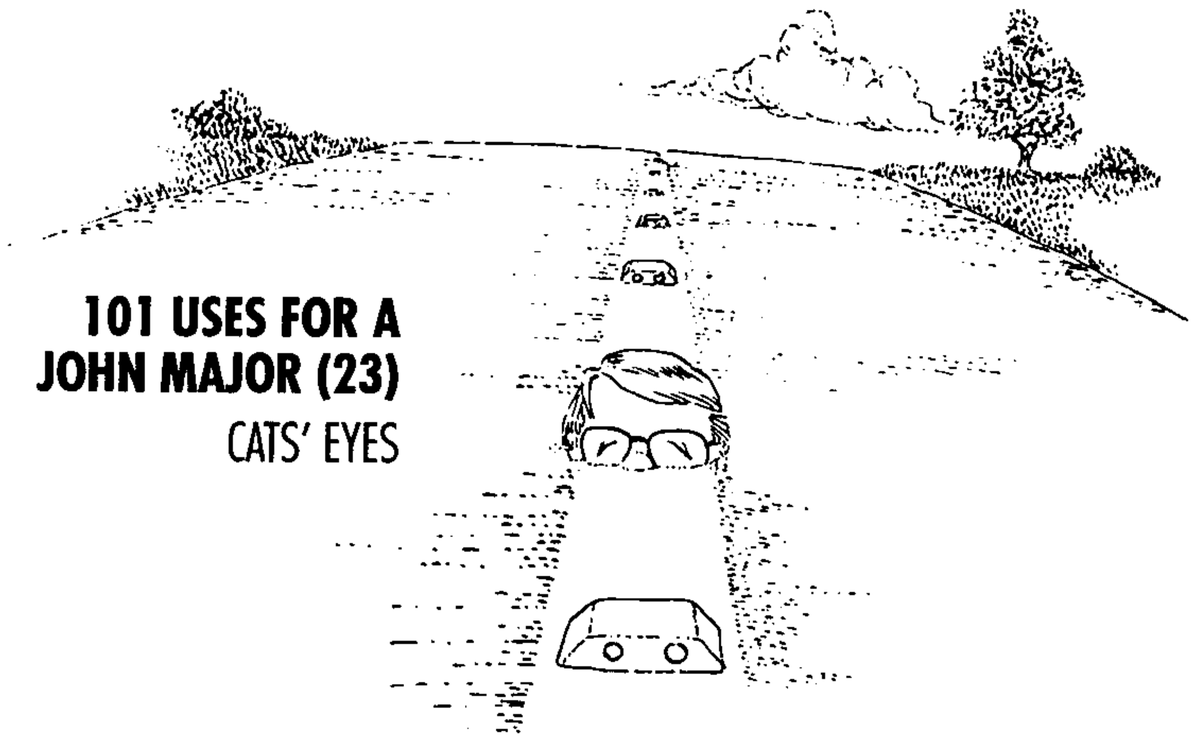
It seems to me vital for the health of the novel that the modern novelist and critic should not shirk engagement in popular forums of this cultural richness and immediacy. In fact, my current rates are very reasonable, all types of gatherings and parties considered, and own transport provided at little extra cost. Current topics at a price to suit every pocket include:

- "The Modern Novel in a Climate of Historical Dismay" (£250)
- "The Modern Novel in a Climate of Historical Dismay and Impotent Outrage" (£275)
- "The Modern Novel in a Climate of Historical Dismay, Impotent Outrage and Underlying Stress" (£300)

BOOK NOW (some dates still available for the forthcoming season owing to cancellations).

Question 1: *"Piss off you wally"*: In this speech from *London Fields* (1989) by Martin Amis, the young, modern, post-colonial British novelist seeks to confront a post-holocaust society in flux, lost in an age incapable of registering its own moral epicentre. Compare and contrast the novelist's juxtaposition of the expression *"piss off"* with the expression *"you wally"* and discuss, citing examples within the given speech, how he achieves the effect of accentuating the alienation of the reader as a paradigm for society's alienation of the individual. Answers on one side of the paper only, no conferring.

This is a question I set my students on the famous Professor Malcolm Bradbury Creative Writing Course at the University of East Anglia. Their answers have proved profoundly helpful to my own understanding of the zeitgeist. Far from being "unusual" or "wholly invented", the expression "wally" is, it emerges, a colloquialism widely employed in street vernacular. In modern Britain, "wally" or, more usually, "Professor Wally" may be translated as "Professor Distinguished" or "Distinguished Professor". My thanks are due to my own students both for honouring me with this up-to-the-minute title, and for supplying me with its translation. You see, it is vital for an exciting modern novelist such as myself to keep in tune with the times, to have his finger on the pulse of contemporary argot. Cheerio, or — as they say in all the most "with-it" coffee shops — "See you later, alligator!"



101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (23)

CATS' EYES

Penny Junor at El Madronal Tennis Club

This British author and TV presenter of travel programmes will give a talk at a luncheon for the Marbella and West Branch of Conservatives Abroad on her back about John and Norma Major.

Gibraltar Chronicle

Mrs Collins claims she was sacked in June 1991 for questioning her rights over equal pay with the transexual, who was also a word processor.

Lincolnshire Echo

EMPIRE THEATRE
BUTLER ROAD, HALSTEAD
From Friday 29th Oct
Not showing Monday
SHEEPLESS IN SEATLE
(PG)
Doors Open 8.00 pm daily
Sat & Sun 5.00 & 8.00pm

Literary Review

Cock and ball story

While England Sleeps
David Leavitt
(Viking, £14.99)

SIR Stephen Spender — now in his mid-eighties — has spent the last half century or so defending his reputation from hostile or mischievous attacks.

Last year's culprit was Hugh David's spectacularly inaccurate *Portrait with Background*, subsequently found to harbour more than 100 errors of fact. Misguided celebrations can be equally unsettling, though, and Sir Stephen's latest recourse to his lawyers has been prompted by an apparent star billing in David Leavitt's current opus about the '30s, Spain and hot young left-wing breath.

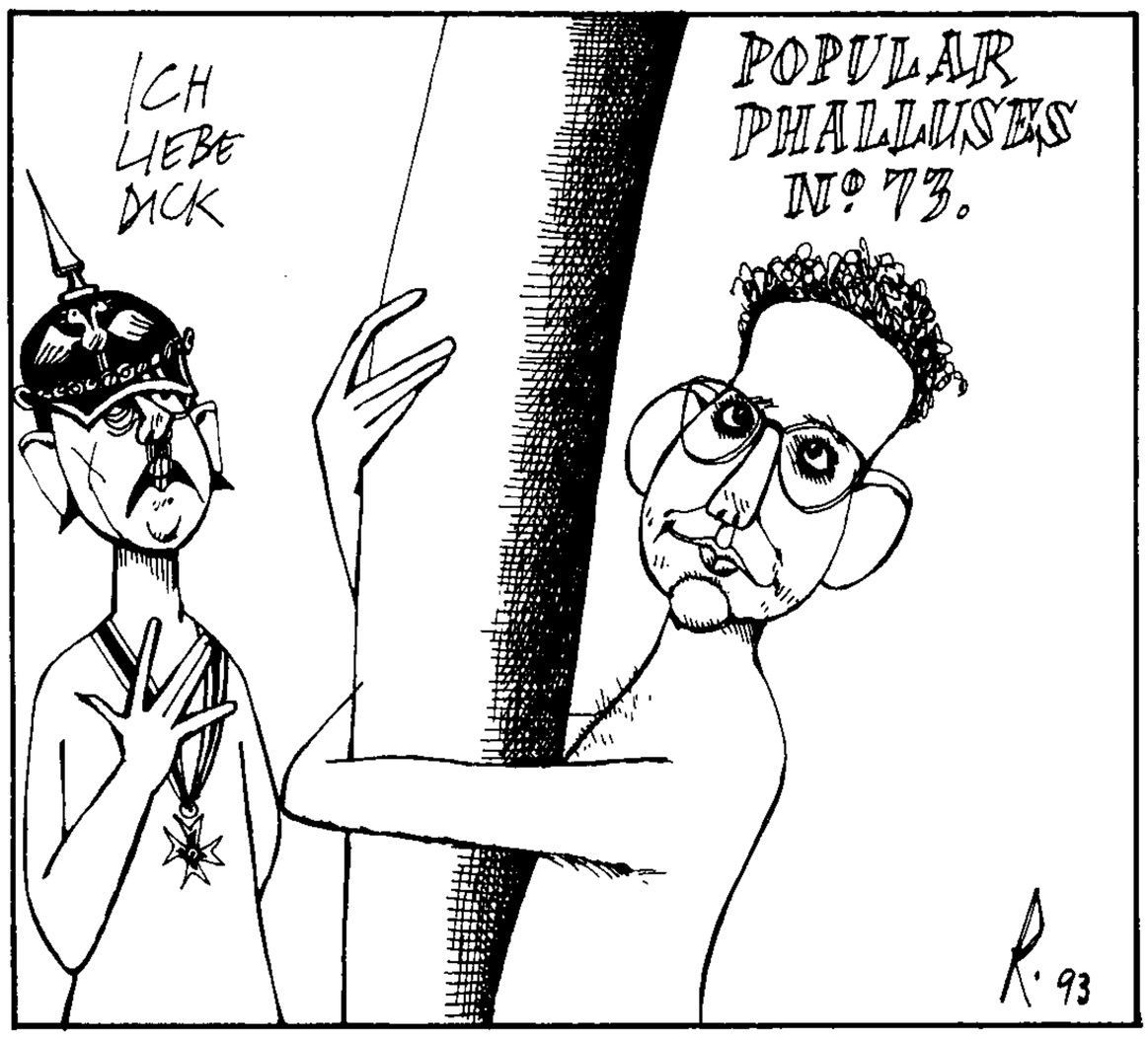
Spender, here masquerading as a writer named Brian Botsford, who conducts a relationship with a likely lad who works on the Underground, looks to have won, as complainants in the world of publishing generally do. At any rate Viking has responded to his displeasure by taking all copies of *While England Sleeps* off the shelves.

Leaving aside questions of identification — and Botsford, with his quivering sexuality, his self-absorption and his journal keeping seems pretty near to the youthful Spender — you can see the litigant's point. Nobody minds appearing in a work of genius, and as Eveyln Waugh once remarked you can say what you like about anybody provided you make him attractive to women (not something that applies here, alas), but *this* dainty little amalgam of sententiousness and sodomy? The badness of *While England Sleeps* is surprising, for David Leavitt's previous books — two novels and a brace of short story collections — were excellent: explorations of gay America which succeeded by showing that their protagonists were ordinary people (not a heterosexual's put-down, by the way — most homosexual heroes are either champion satyromaniacs or neurotics).

Stick Leavitt down in pre-war England, though, drench him in the whole Spender/Auden/Isherwood perfumery of arty chat, lefty politics and earnest buggery and he falls to pieces. Why is this?

Apart from the hackneyed theme — upper class writer meets working class boy, who breaks his heart and then dies on the way back from Spain — the fault can be laid at the door of the novel's obsessions. These are various — they include communism and the London Underground — but rising effortlessly to dominate them is a single fixation: penises.

In fact Botsford's interest in the male sexual organ is the novel's distinguishing feature. As early as page 20 he is remembering the "long, disinterested cock" of an old college friend. A bit later, considering a school chum reencountered as a left-wing activist, he recalls that "his cock was enormous".



Fortunately Botsford's own genitalia are a source of equal fascination to others. "Got quite a big one, have you?" the plebian Edward suggests on the occasion of their first date. "Like to see it?" Brian inquires. "Quite a big one" a casual pick-up found in a urinal somewhere confirms. "Want me to take care of it?"

Was it for this, one wonders, that the trailblazers of the gay novel, Firbank, Forster et al, laboured for so long? It will have become clear by now that Leavitt can't do the dialogue. Neither, unhappily, can he shake off a kind of sub-romantic breathlessness that renders most of his rapt descriptions faintly ridiculous.

Never mind the "long, disinterested cock"; a bit later we come across a "zealous erection", not to mention some sleeping children who "exhaled long, ragged ribbons of breath". All this is interspersed with some serious chatter about communism and some terrible aphorisms of the "Who touches the body, however fleetingly, also touches the soul" sort.

More interesting, perhaps, is the question of provenance. If Botsford is Spender, then *While England Sleeps* bears an uncanny resemblance to *The Temple* (1988), Spender's fictionalised account of what he got up to in late '20s Berlin. There is the same self-importance, the same prosy reflection on life and art, the same excitable style. On second thoughts, perhaps we should really be congratulating Leavitt for producing a scintillating exercise in ventriloquism.

Whatever Leavitt's intentions, one wonders why Sir Stephen is so assiduously blocking off a thoroughfare down which he himself has so lately travelled. *While England Sleeps* might be a silly dramatisation of the early life and opinions of Sir Stephen Spender, but it is no sillier than some of Spender's own efforts in the same direction.

THE LADY'S PAGES ARE NOT FOR TURNING

Books & Bookmen

☐ FORMER cabinet minister Kenneth Baker showed entrepreneurial flair when selling serialisation rights to his pisspoor memoir, *The Turbulent Years*.

His then literary agent Michael Sissons sought bids from various papers, but not the *Sunday Times* as it already had the Thatcher book. The best offer was for £25,000 from the *Daily Express*, for which Oily had written the odd (*sic*) article.

Ken told Sissons he wanted no less than £50,000 and said he would do the serialisation deal himself. So Baker contacted Sir Nick Lloyd, saying he wanted to see his memoirs go to the *Express*. The trouble, he said, was that another paper was going to offer £50,000. Could the *Express* get closer?

Sir Nick must have been suspicious, for the *Express* rang Pat Kavanagh, who handles serialisation deals for Sissons's firm, Peters Fraser and Dunlop. Is it true, the *Express* asked, that Baker has been offered £50,000 by another paper for the serialisation rights to his memoirs?

This put Kavanagh in a spot — which was only resolved when her agency dispensed with Kenneth Baker as a client and could then tell the *Express* that it no longer represented him.

It all ended well for Baker, however, who persuaded the *Sunset Times* to pay him a sum in the region of £45,000.

■ *ONLY a year or so after announcing that it would not accept book reviews written by critics who have close links with the author, the Sunset Times seems to have abandoned the unequal struggle.*

On 17 October the lead article in the ST's books supplement was a most generous review by Lucy Hughes-Hallett of Ruth Brandon's new book about Harry Houdini, published by Secker & Warburg.

The paper neglected to point out that Hughes-Hallett is married to Dan Franklin — who until recently was the editorial director of... Secker & Warburg, in which capacity he commissioned and edited Ms Brandon's book.

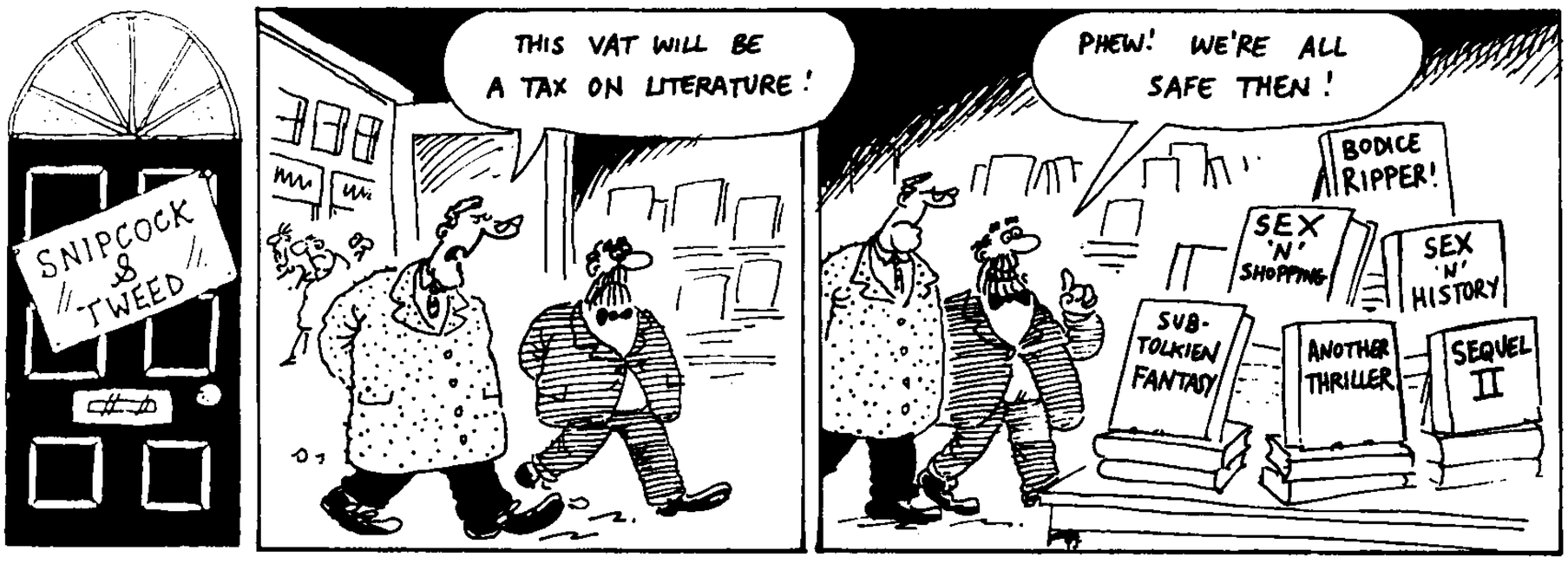
☐ **AKME, one of the world's great publishers, has followed its triumphant hardback publication of Andrew Malcolm's *Making Names* with a paperback.**

It is available at larger branches of W.H. Smug, where the controversial tome is being used to test demand for philosophy among Smug's customers.

The publishers cheekily preface the paperback with 10 pages on the history of the book and its eventual non-publication by OUP, and a chronology of subsequent legal action.

In a recent *Bookseller*, OUP's sales and marketing director, Simon Wratten, is quoted as saying that in recent months Smug's buying for stock of the great university press's publications has diminished. Surely the WHS/OUP feud can't be connected with *Making Names*?

'Bookworm'



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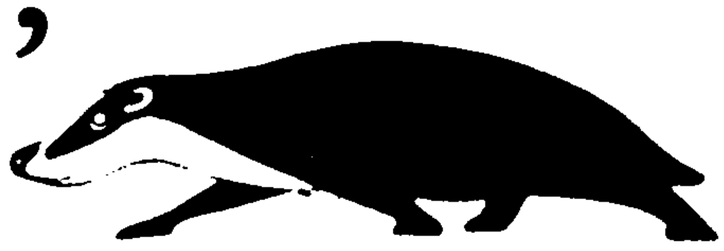
BADGERS' SET-UP



THE STAGECOACH Theory of Free Enterprise — knock out all competitors until the big firm has a monopoly — is now being put into practice on the buses in Bristol.

One result of "deregulation" is that almost all bus services in the city are run by the Badgerline Group, which is only slightly smaller than Stagecoach (see *Eye* 831).

The only exception is the X80 service from the city centre to the Hartcliffe estate. The operators on this route, with three buses, are Ambassador Travel. Fares are low and the service is popular and efficient. It poses no threat to the enormous Badgerline monopoly.

On 24 May this year the wholly-owned Badgerline subsidiary, Wessex Travel, suddenly introduced an identical service over the same route. Wessex buses arrived at the stops exactly five minutes before Ambassador buses and charged absurdly low fares.

This was almost exactly what happened at Bognor Regis, where Stagecoach was hauled over the coals by the office of fair trading (OFT) for running a competitor off the road. The OFT denounced Stagecoach for "predatory pricing", an exact description of what Badgerline is up to in Bristol.

At the end of May, one of the Ambassador drivers complained to the OFT. The OFT duly started an investigation — which is still going on today. In most circumstances, this long, five-month "investigation" would have been catastrophic for the smaller company, which would have been driven off the road. Fortunately for Ambassador, most of their passengers realise what is going on. In spite of the much lower fares charged by Wessex, they have stayed loyal to the smaller company. But in the long run the appeal of the lower fares may prove irresistible. Ambassador, already running close to the margin, feels doomed.

If they are driven out, Badgerline will have a complete monopoly in the conurbation, and be able to charge whatever fares it wants. Ambassador drivers blame the OFT for the absurd delay in "investigating" a case which is almost exactly the same as one on which it has already adjudicated. They say the OFT pretends it is against monopolies, but is reluctant to take "hasty" action against a monopoly set up by a private company which pays out good dividends and supports the government.

SUEDS CORNER

■ THE SPATE of business collapses that accompanied the end of the Thatcher miracle is now ushering the Big Six accountancy firms into court where they are suing each other with increasing gusto.

Over the Barlow Clowes fiasco, the government (represented by Coopers & Lybrand and Ernst & Young) is suing Touche Ross for £30 million. Meanwhile, over BCCI, Touche Rosse is suing Ernst & Young and Price Waterhouse for £5.2 million.

Over Atlantic Computers, part of the British & Commonwealth debacle, Price Waterhouse is suing Touche Ross. Over Wallace Smith, KPMG is suing Coopers & Lybrand, and over London United Investments, Price Waterhouse is suing KPMG. Over Polly Peck, Touche Ross is expected to sue Coopers & Lybrand. . . while over Maxwell, Robson Rhodes, Price Waterhouse and Arthur Anderson are to sue Coopers & Lybrand as well.

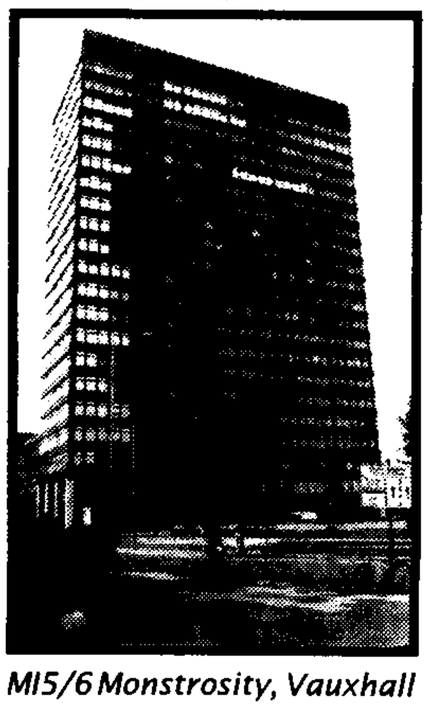
The unlucky accountants in the latest business balls-up — that of Queens Moat Hotels — are not in the Big Six. They are Bird Luckin, a small Essex firm which trained Alan Porter until he left to become finance director of Queens Moat Hotels. Mr Porter's brother David, based in the Chelmsford office of Bird Luckin, has just become a full partner.

If Bird Luckin gets into trouble for its auditing of Queens Moat, it may want to take advice from the man who gave the firm its name: John Bird. Mr Bird was a council member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants from 1974 to 1989.

OBSCENE BUT NOT HURD

DOUGLAS HURD, foreign secretary, tells Labour MP LLew Smith that "fitting out and equipping" the monstrous new headquarters of MI5 and MI6 on the banks of the Thames will cost £86 million.

£86 million! This fantastic figure (which includes just the equipment, cables, furniture, etc, and not the building itself) has shocked even hardheaded accountants at MI5 who are used to getting more than they want from government departments.



MI5/6 Monstrosity, Vauxhall

Secret letters, which some believe were typed on MI5 computers, started to circulate among important people drawing attention to this extravagance. The letters concentrated on the furniture for the new building. They estimated the cost of furniture for MI6 at more than £4 million. MI5 demanded "matching kit", which worked out at £7.5 million.

Patriots in MI5 were furious that the contracts for this furniture went to a Dutch firm called Ahrend. They wanted to know whether the job had been put out to tender, and if so whether Ahrend had put in the lowest bid. These worries led to a series of questions to the foreign secretary from Labour MP Mark Fisher.

Were the contracts awarded to equip, furnish and decorate the new Vauxhall Cross offices of the Secret Intelligence Services awarded to the company submitting the lowest tender?

HURD: "Contracts for the project were awarded to companies whose tenders met the requirements of the project and represented the best value for money." In other words: question not answered.

What companies won the contracts?

HURD: "I do not propose for reasons of security and commercial confidentiality, to comment on individual companies awarded contracts for projects on behalf of the security and intelligence agencies". Again, question not answered.

Were the contracts put out to tender?

HURD: "These contracts have either been put out to tender or let on a negotiated basis by the project management contractor with firms which were retained from the development stage of the contract." Question not answered.

Did all the contracts go to British firms?

HURD: "A number of contracts for this project were awarded to British companies." Question not answered.

How many companies bid, and what were the bids?

HURD: "A number of companies tendered for the various contracts but it would be wrong to comment on individual bids on grounds of security and commercial confidentiality." Question not answered.

Douglas Hurd might expect to get away with this sort of thing in parliament, but it is unlikely the angry patriots in his intelligence services will take fudge for an answer. Mark Fisher has written to Hurd again demanding more specific replies — and the *Eye* confidently expects to receive more of those carefully-typed, informative letters about the Ahrend contract.

Bridge of lies?

■ **EDDIE BROWNING rings the *Eye* from Full Sutton prison, near York, with what he calls "terrific news".**

He was convicted in 1989 of the murder of Marie Wilks on the M50 motorway. The prosecution case against him depended on the coincidence that he was driving a silver Renault 25 on the day of the murder, and that more than one witness claimed the murder car was a Renault 25.

Mr Browning has always insisted he didn't drive on the M50 on the day of the murder, but travelled instead on the M4 and crossed the Severn bridge. The prosecution submitted photographs made up from the videos of the cameras which photograph cars going over the bridge. They claimed that not a single Renault 25 crossed the bridge during the relevant time.

This evidence was crucial to the prosecution case and was not seriously dented by the defence. But now, says Eddie Browning, his lawyers have had a close look at the original videos. "There's a Renault 25 on the bridge all right," he says "and it's just about the time I said I was there. There are experts to prove it."

If Eddie is right, his case, which was referred to the court of appeal a year ago, could prove very interesting indeed.

AITKEN HUME AND CRY

WHAT a terrible thing it must be for a minister of state to sit and watch from Whitehall while the family firm he built up is torn to pieces by public scandal and internal strife.

Such is the fate of Jonathan Aitken, minister for defence procurement. The investment company he founded 12 years ago with his cousin Tim, is Aitken Hume. And it was under Jonathan's chairmanship (1981-1990) that Aitken Hume was effectively divided into three.

The first group, owning 31.9 per cent, is the Said Trust, owned by Jonathan's trusted friend Wafic Said. Said is also a close friend of the Thatcher family, and more than once has lent his fashionable London house to Mark Thatcher.

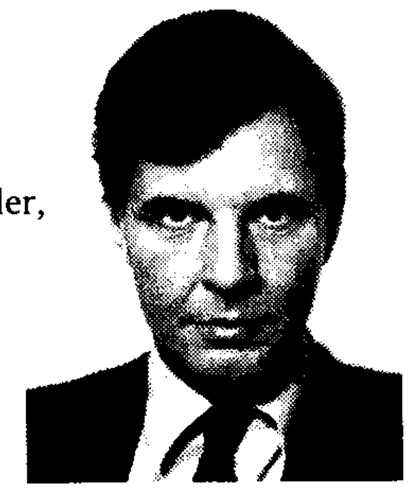
The second big controlling interest (also 31.9 per cent) which chairman Jonathan welcomed was the Allied Group of Hong Kong, controlled by the Malayan-born businessman Lee Ming Tee. Dissent on the board could not be settled by the smooth-talking Jonathan, who stepped aside as chairman in 1990 and left the board altogether when he first became a minister after the 1992 election (he replaced another old chum, Alan Clark, at defence procurement).

But the rows continued and came to a head at dawn on 15 September when 300 Hong Kong police raided more than 40 offices of the Allied Group. The raids followed the 688-page report of an inquiry into the group, which, said Hong Kong's financial secretary Hamish Macleod, "raised serious implications for the standards of corporate conduct".

When the *Sunday Times* reported the raids, it referred to Wafic Said as "an arms dealer". For some reason, this infuriated the Syrian-born entrepreneur, who wrote an angry letter to the paper explaining his opposition to Allied's recent effort to divert funds to the Far East, and denouncing the reference to "arms dealer" as "offensive". This cannot have gone down too well with Wafic's friend J. Aitken, who spends most of his public life saying how magnificent are the men and women who sell arms for Britain.

Two weeks after this angry letter, Zaid Idilby, Syrian-born ally of Wafic Said, announced his resignation as chief executive of Aitken Hume. The resignation, he said, was "entirely amicable" — but few City observers could separate it from the disturbing events in Hong Kong.

And what of the third big shareholder, Fiduciary Management Services Ltd, of Grand Bahama?



The key figure behind FMS, which with the FMR Corporation owns 15 per cent of Aitken Hume, is Edward St George, the jet-setting, controversial chief executive of the port authority at Freeport, Grand Bahama.

St George is well known to *Eye* readers as a prime mover in the bust Lloyd's syndicate Oakeley Vaughan (see *Eyes passim*). And nor have his activities in the Bahamas gone entirely without criticism.

In 1988, the *Miami Herald* revealed that he had offered a $2.5 million bribe to a New Orleans electricity official as part of a bid to set up an expensive power link between Florida and Freeport. Two months later, John Hinchliffe, the British-born director of Freeport harbour, resigned after eight years because, he said, he could not tolerate Mr St George's business methods. The last straw, he said, was when he had been asked to find a job on the harbour authority for Julia Armbrister, the sister-in-law of Sir Lynden Pindling, then the Bahamas prime minister with whom St George had very close business links.

One of Hinchliffe's previous rows with St George followed the harbourmaster's criticism of the state of a ship owned by Luis Reynoso, a business partner of Pindling's son, Obie. Hinchliffe, who now works as a harbourmaster in Britain, confirmed all this (and more) to the *Eye*.

Ever since Pindling was voted out of office in some disarray last year, St George has been looking for an alternative base for his business operations. He has even been prospecting in Castro's Cuba.

So it seems that from the Bahamas to Hong Kong, the Aitken Hume empire is suffering. How its executives must yearn for a return of their distinguished chairman, author of the *Young Meteors* (1965), J. Aitken.

How interested is Aitken himself? When he left the board in 1992 he still had 130,000 ordinary shares, 12,000 convertible ones and options to buy 124,700 others on very good terms indeed. What has happened to these shares? No doubt they are in a "blind trust", as recommended to ministers by the cabinet office. If Jonathan Aitken, a passionate campaigner for open government, likes to tell us more, our columns are open to him.

The Tale of Jocelyn Fisher

■ THERE has been more trouble at the London borough of Lambeth: not about alleged fraud this time, but about racial discrimination.

For several years now, black workers at the town hall have become increasingly disturbed by the large number of cases against the council at the local industrial tribunal which have resulted in findings of racial discrimination and cost the council thousands of pounds in damages.

A typical case, heard this time last year, concerned a computer operator, Mr B.C. D'Souza, who claimed he had been sacked because he was black. His claim included many allegations of racial stereotyping and abuse.

The council, which represents one of the largest black populations in Britain, did not defend itself. The tribunal, presided over by Lt Col D.W.H. Brayden, found unanimously for D'Souza and ordered the council to reinstate him and pay him £5,000 damages. That was the last in a series of five cases taken by Mr D'Souza against the council, in all of which the tribunal found for him. It concluded: "We feel that the respondent, a local authority, has acted in an oppressive manner and also with a view to profit. . . It has also to be noted that the respondent is under a statutory duty under section 71 of the race relations act 1976 to ensure that it does not act in a racially discriminatory way."

This was not an isolated case. A few weeks ago, a black worker at the council, Adie Aydbiojo, had his case alleging racial discrimination by the council accepted by the tribunal where it is expected to be heard shortly. In the past three years no fewer than seven allegations of racial discrimination against Lambeth council have been upheld at tribunal.

For those three years, the council officer most responsible for these matters, the council's chief personnel officer and head of corporate personnel, was Jocelyn Fisher. Fisher, who was brought up and educated in South Africa, was often the subject of complaints, especially from African workers on the council. When she was appointed in 1990, 11 of her staff of 40 were black. This has been reduced to three. One senior training manager, Julie Sheriff, a black African, had to spend a year at home on full pay because of personal difficulties with Ms Fisher.

No action was taken until last July when a new chief executive, Henry Gilby, was appointed. At once he started to get complaints about Ms Fisher. Irene Clarke, head of personnel, a black African, said she was shocked by Ms Fisher's attitudes and threatened to take yet another case to the industrial tribunal. Gilby persuaded her to hold off her action while he commissioned a confidential independent report from three council officers. The *Eye* understands that the report, which was submitted on 14 October, did not pull any punches.

Gilby acted promptly and asked for Fisher's resignation. A suitably cordial formula was agreed and Fisher agreed to go. Black workers on the council are relieved but not entirely satisfied. They want to know why Jocelyn Fisher was able to last so long. Their questions cannot be answered by the existing Lambeth administration and should be directed at the previous chief executive, who appointed Fisher.

His name is Herman Ouseley, and his new job is full-time Chairman . . . of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Herman Ouseley

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG,or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

■ AS PART of his law and order offensive, the home secretary Michael Howard plans to appoint a new layer of police officers called parish constables.

They would be junior to the existing "special constables". But a recent case in Birmingham suggests that not too much care is taken in vetting even special constables before they are appointed.

On hearing that special constable Simon Walsh was to give evidence in a court case, lawyers for the other side made inquiries about him. They discovered that SPC Walsh's real name was Simon Peter Houghton, and that he had previous convictions for dishonesty, driving while disqualified and, er. . ., impersonating a police officer.

When these facts were pointed out, "Mr Walsh" was not called to give evidence.

In the City. . .*see over*

In the City

ANY LINGERING credibility for the alleged plot to bribe the Nadir trial judge was demolished by the "revelation" in the *Independent* that the plotters, ex-con Michael Francis and businesswoman Wendy Welsher, had confessed to making it all up.

That they should feel obliged to travel to Nadir's Northern Cyprus sanctuary, joining the ever growing numbers of his latter day Hole-in-the-Wall gang of fugitives taking refuge in the unrecognised state, in order to admit to being liars says it all. They were working for the bankrupt Polly Peck fraudsman when they disclosed the "plot" — a suspected plan B to disrupt the trial if all else failed — and they are working for him now.

Lest we forget, Francis and Welsher but months ago were so afraid of Nadir's revenge for blowing the whistle on the "plot" to Scotland Yard that they were under police protection. Francis, a man whose dialogue comes from watching too many TV gangsters and is not helped by a possible drug problem, talked incessantly about fears for his and his family's safety.

Welsher (was ever a name more appropriate?) told *Today* only in August: "Don't you know what that man will do to me? My life is in grave danger." Now, all that is not only forgotten but forgiven. They are both Nadir's honoured guests!

Francis and Welsher would now have the world believe that they were induced to concoct the bribery plot to frame Nadir by the serious farce office (SFO) and Scotland Yard, concerned that otherwise he would beat the Polly Peck rap.

Francis, a police informer as well as a conman, is said to have been put up to this in early 1991, within months if not weeks of Nadir's arrest. Why the police and SFO should have been so pessimistic about convicting Nadir at such an early stage is just one of the palpable inconsistencies in the Francis story.

Equally disturbing to anyone other than the *Independent*'s credulous Tim Kelsey, its former man in Turkey, are the number of increasingly bizarre claims made by Francis and Welsher. Francis was the author of the preposterous "super-plot" which involved not only Nadir but his barrister Anthony Scrivener, the trial judge Mr Justice Tucker and the suspended Metropolitan police assistant commissioner, Wyn Jones.

Welsher has sought to implicate senior Tory figure Lord Hailsham, the former lord chancellor, in a supposed attempt to sell a valuable painting to finance the £3.5 million bribe scheme to enable Nadir to obtain his passport and flee.

Despite such fantasies the *Independent* infers that Francis and Welsher should be believed and that their allegations of a Scotland Yard/SFO plot to frame Nadir are therefore credible.

The proclaimed unprompted, unrewarded Francis/Welsher "confessions" serve Nadir's purposes admirably. They enable him to launch another media campaign and so continue to pave the way for a possible return to Britain and bid to dismiss the fraud charges he faces on the grounds (à la Birmingham Six police officers) that he cannot have a fair trial because of prejudicial publicity, much of it self-generated. After all, those who do not consider him a master crook believe he was fitted up by the police!

Neither the quality of the witnesses, the fact that it may be serving Nadir's purpose, nor that almost alone (see Media News) it appears to take the Francis/Welsher claims seriously, seems to worry the *Independent* — now first in line for the Nadir feed — or its once saintly editor Andreas Whittam Smith. But then this is the newspaper which peddles the investment advice of tainted tipster and convicted company law breaker Jim Slater to its readers.

"PEACE has broken out on the Lonrho board," declared an adviser to major shareholder Dieter Bock following Bock's latest success (be it by a rumoured 11-5 boardroom vote) — creation of audit and remuneration committees, both previously resisted by "Tiny" Rowland.

That claim is as spurious as Rowland's former declaration of the indivisibility of the two joint chief executives. A phoney peace will last until Bock makes another of his anticipated moves to erode the power and perks of a man whose proud boast is "you can never have enough enemies".

This prospect will not be welcomed by one of Bock's two nominees as a Lonrho non-executive director, Hanson board member Peter Harper. Harper's main claim to extremely limited fame is that he handled investor relations for Lord Hanson, a task which has not exactly been considered a success either before or since the disastrous ICI bid that never was.

Indeed, so successful has Harper been in explaining the predatory peer to his institutional shareholders that Hanson has for some time been looking for a new PR man. Despite this and suggestions from insiders that Harper might be among those old hands likely soon to exit the boardroom in a move to create a younger, post-James and Gordon (White) image, there is understood to have been some surprise at Harper's Lonrho move.

Whether the peer welcomed such a high-profile distraction and association is a matter for considerable speculation, especially as Hanson has been supportive of Rowland in the not too distant past. Should Harper find himself in the Lonrho crossfire he may find a retreat to Hanson less than secure.

GOOD TO HEAR that despite the pressures of his just started fraud trial, Roger Levitt may be renewing his links to boxing after the reported split with WBC world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

The former insurance super-salesman is rumoured to be involved with helping a small stable of boxers, possibly the one run by former referee Mike Jacobs, who also used to sell insurance.

The ever confident Levitt is also associated with a security alarm venture. With his bankruptcy able to be discharged in a year or so, Roger is clearly planning for a future untroubled by events at the Old Bailey.

STRANGE EVENTS at financial PR firm Haggie, Binns. Ifwy, formerly Wisefollow, the erstwhile parent company of Haggie, Binns & Co Ltd, went into liquidation in March this year, due to its liabilities. The last accounts were those for 1990, and these had been belatedly filed in February 1992.

Until at least May 1992, Haggie, Binns & Co Ltd had been a dormant company despite the use of its name as the trading entity for the combined talents of David Haggie and Peter Binns, best known in his former PR life when he was backed by the publicity-loving Michael Ashcroft.

Whether it has since been activated is not clear from the public filings by these experts in communication. Nor is the role in their business of the unlimited Haggie, Binns & Co. However, the limited version has recently become a subsidiary of the Haggie owned Guideline Holdings. No doubt confused Haggie, Binns clients will be impressed to learn that their PR advisers are doing so well.

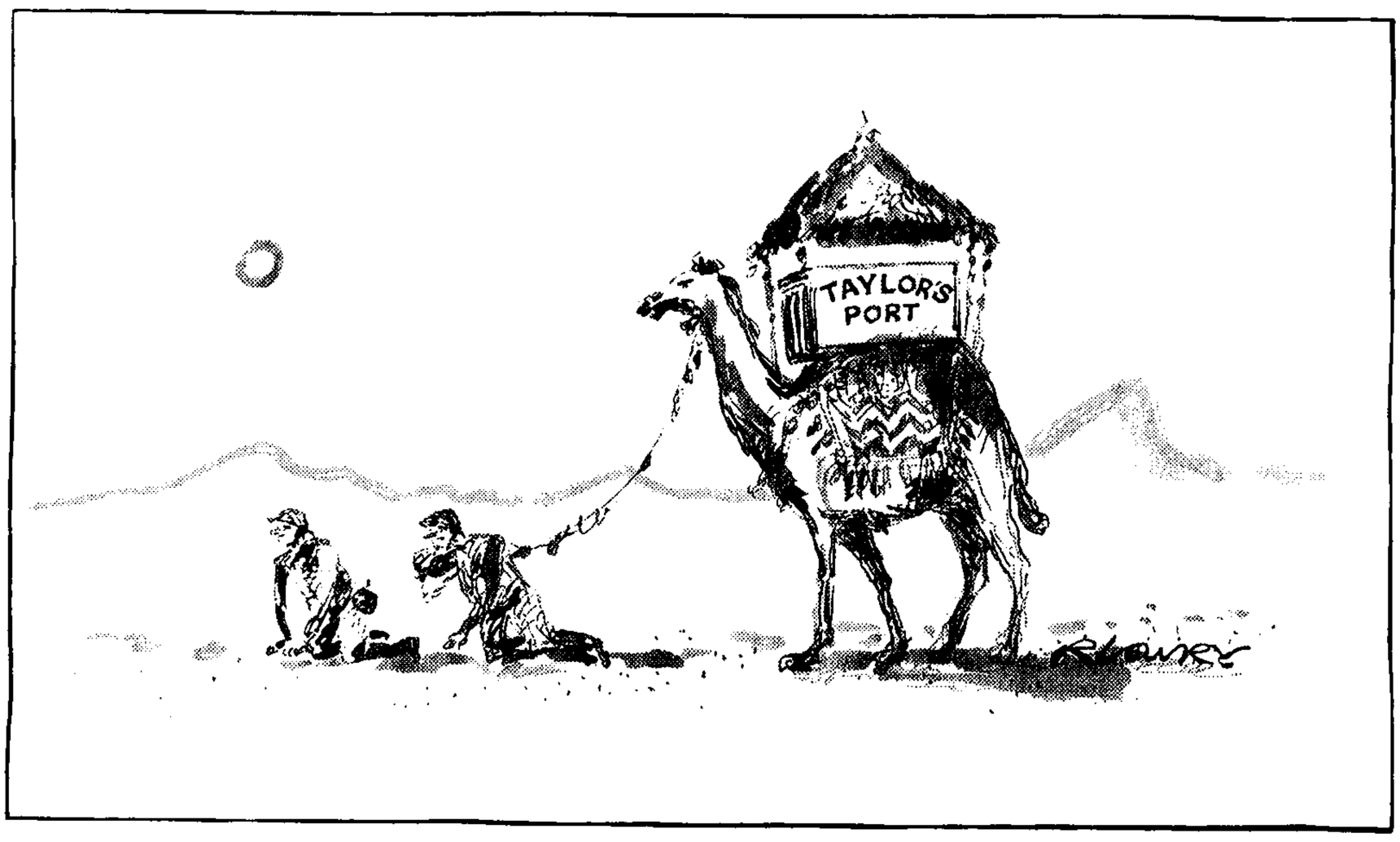
NOBODY could accuse *Sunday Times* City editor Jeff Randall of forgetting his friends. Remember Philip Green, Roger Levitt, George Walker? Jeff did. Now it is the turn of Michael Ashcroft.

Despite the unfortunate fact that ADT shares had failed to respond to his last "plug" in June, Randall gave Ashcroft even more fulsome treatment on 24 October celebrating the demise of his arch-enemy, deposed Laidlaw chief executive Don Jackson, and contrasting that with Ashcroft staging "one of the business world's most unlikely comebacks".

Too bad that despite "Ashcroft's recovery" ADT shares at £6 are still a little off their £20 peak of 1990. But then Jeff and Michael know each other well, sharing a love of golf and Bermuda.

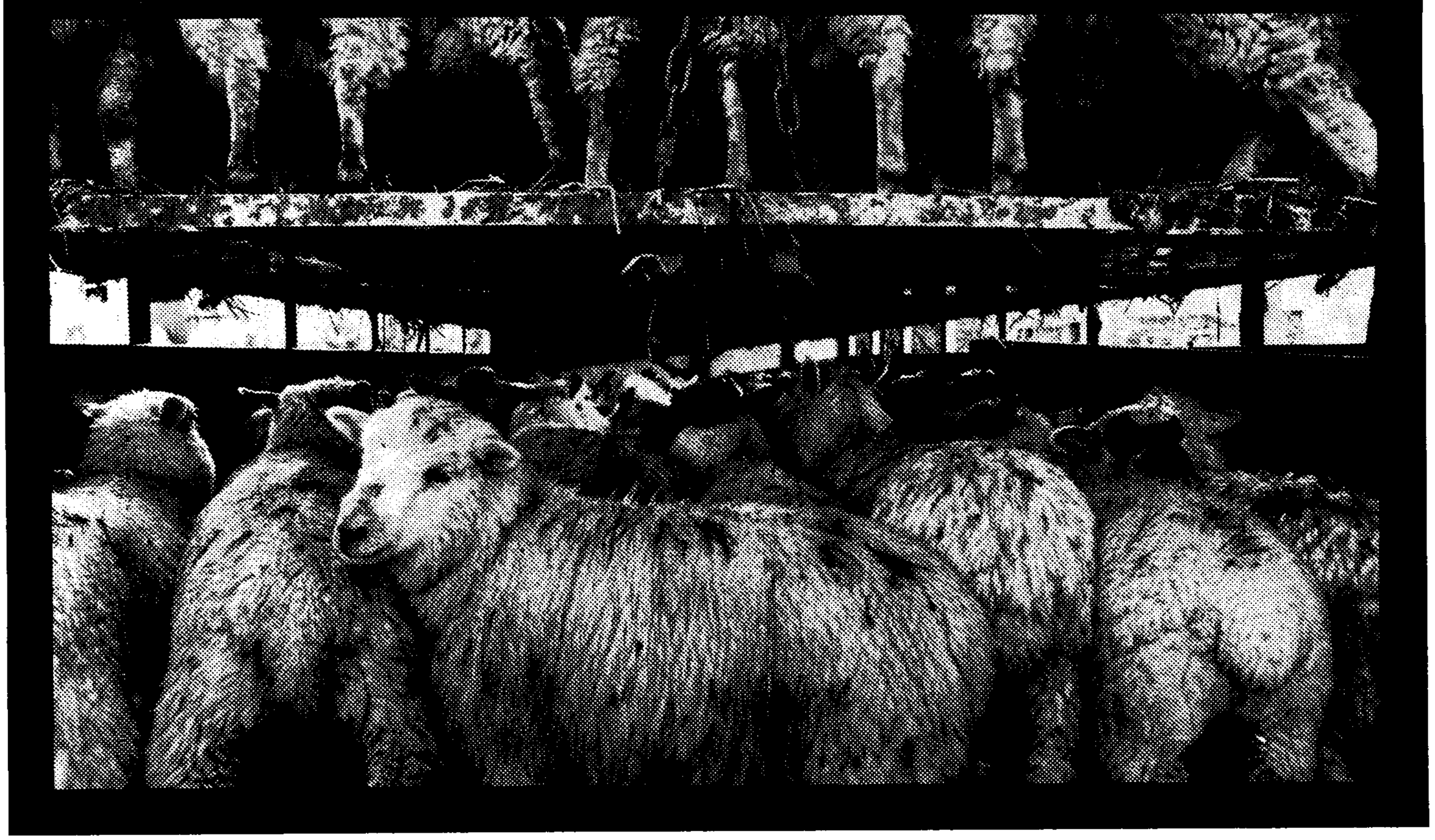
'Slicker'

Advertisement



1692
TAYLOR'S PORT
BEST taken Seriously

Before they're roasted in garlic and rosemary they're soaked in urine and excrement.



The trucks that carry livestock across Europe hold up to 800 sheep at a time.

The journeys can last over twenty-four hours, but the animals' bladders cannot. They begin to urinate and excrete inside the lorry.

One sheep produces around a litre of urine and 700 grammes of faeces a day.

And so do the other 799.

Since they are trapped in such a confined space their fleeces quickly become coated in droppings.

For the rest of the trip they're wet, cold and some even suffer skin burns.

Eventually the urinating stops, but only because the animals are given no water in transit.

The size of Continental trucks means that unfamiliar flocks are often mixed together (an unsettling experience for any animal).

In the crush the weaker sheep lose their footing, fall to the floor and are trampled by the others.

Some die.

And all this happens so European meat traders can squeeze a little more profit from their livestock.

The sheep could be slaughtered close to their farms, refrigerated and then transported (a method favoured by many farmers).

But offal and hides fetch a slightly higher price abroad and freshly killed meat is also at a premium, so the practice continues.

At least until the law is changed.

EC agriculture ministers are about to meet to discuss livestock transportation regulations.

The RSPCA want to see an eight hour limit on the transportation of live animals for slaughter enforced immediately across the European Community.

Britain's representative at the negotiations is Gillian Shephard and there's still time to let her know your views on the crucial issue of maximum journey time.

Which is why we need your help.

Please phone the number below for a free RSPCA information pack and to find out what further action you can take.

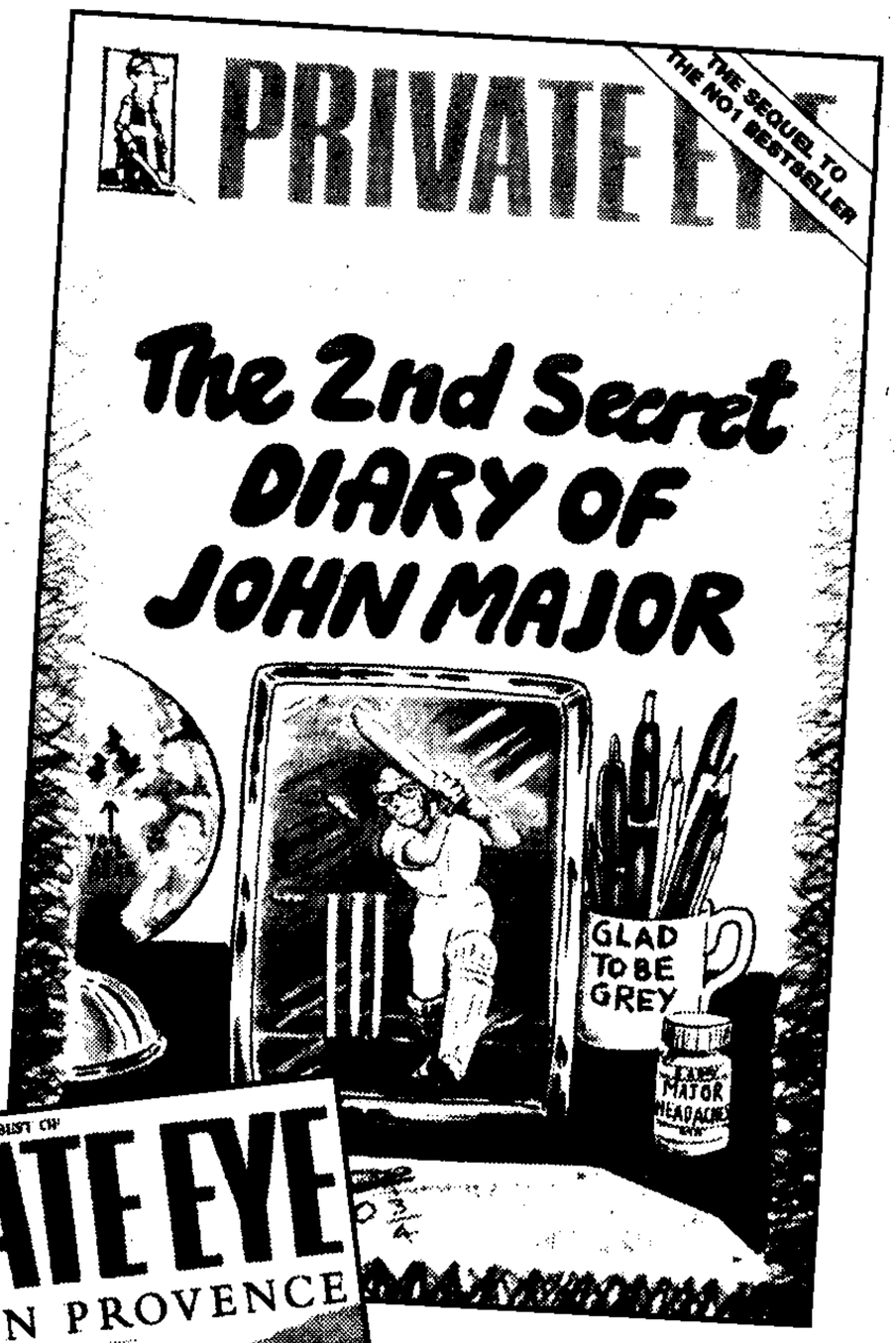
Perhaps we can then persuade Mrs Shephard to look after our sheep.

RSPCA
REG CHARITY 219099

STOP THE NEEDLESS TRANSPORTATION OF ANIMALS. PHONE 0500 34 35 36.

'MRS THATCHER HAS DONE IT AGAIN. SHE HAS PROVED THAT SHE IS COMPLETELY INSANE.'

John Major, aged 50 ¾ - from *The 2nd Secret DIARY*


PRIVATE EYE
THE SEQUEL TO THE NO1 BESTSELLER
The 2nd Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR
GLAD TO BE GREY
FARM MAJOR HEADACHES
THE BEST OF
PRIVATE EYE
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Peter Maylionaire
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Many MPs use Heath for sex, says gay group
Suffolk females cheaper
Buy your tickets for a great show
Rats protest at rundown city houses
XMAS TREES
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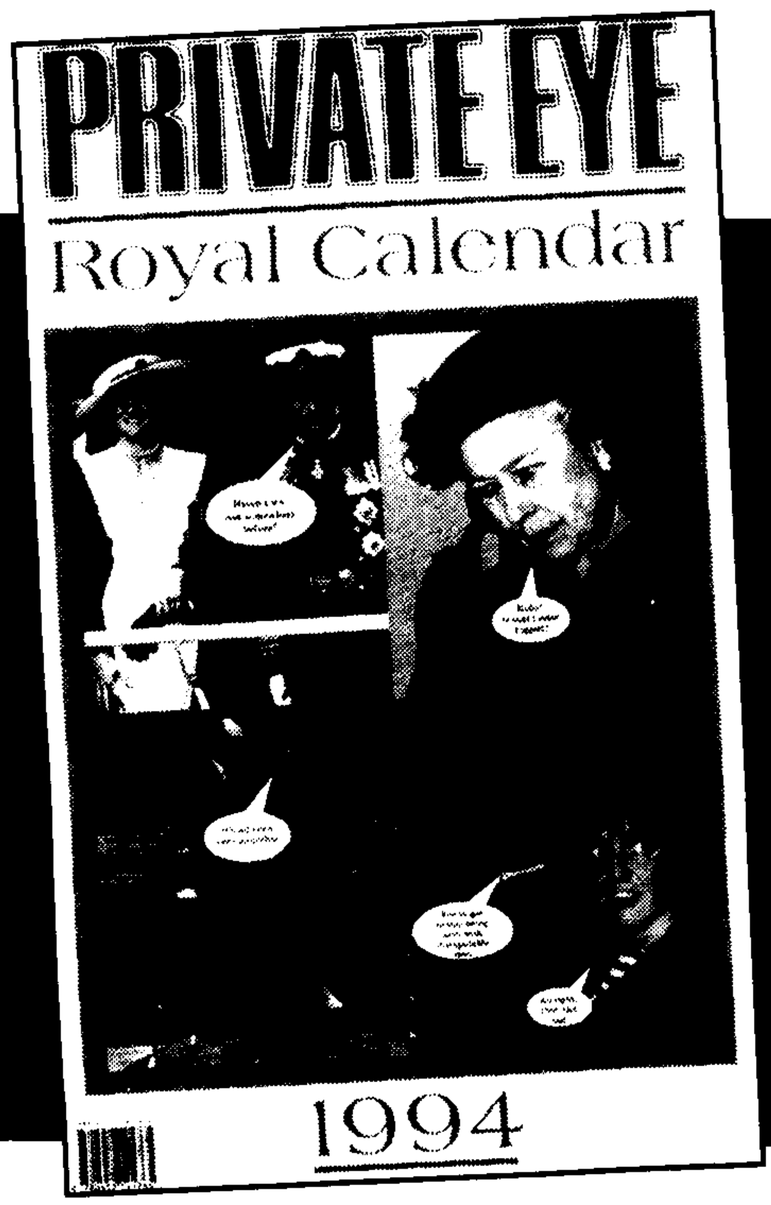

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EROTIC FICTION catalogue £2.00 to DOMINO BOOKS, PO Box 83, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2RJ.

GOVERNMENT AUCTION News. 0686 668851.

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GIRLS' OWN magazine — for women who prefer women. £2. B.M. PRINCESS (P.E.), London WC1 (full address).

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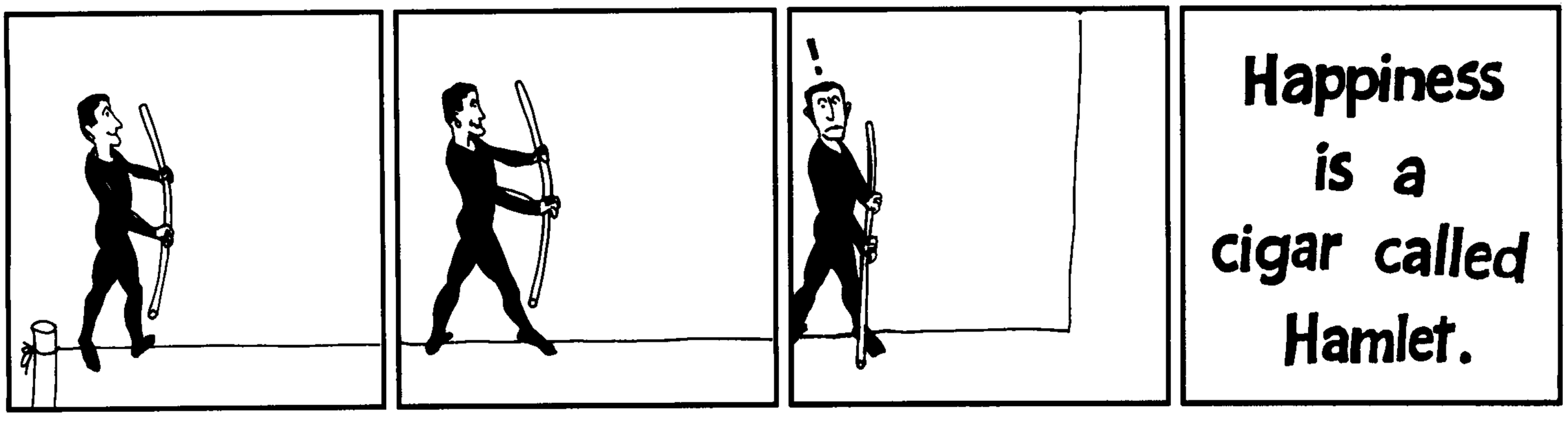

ELISABETH FRINK limited edition made for children's charity. £5,100. Enquiries Box 0528.

VIZ MAGAZINES. £9 per complete year. Fiesta magazine Vol. 1 No. 1 1956, £12. (0428) 751660.

ORIGINAL SCULPTURE. Michael Sanderson. See Eye Need.

BLUE EYED, blond(ish), humorous, West Country female, seeks professional male, 40s. Box 6032.

MAN (24), SLIM, healthy, solvent, seeks slim thirtysomething female for discreet daytime relationship. London area. Photo please (returned). Box 6132.

IS YOUR HUSBAND having an affair? My wife is. I'm not seeking revenge, a quick fix or a shoulder to cry on. I seek a lady similarly situated looking for a genuine relationship. I'm 46, good sense of humour, polite, have time for the right lady, generous, entertaining, fit and outward going. Box 6232.

WEST MIDLANDS footloose and fancy free perhaps you are the man for me, intelligent and caring too, contact and ask to view. 50-60. Box 6332.

MAN (36) SEEKS woman (25-40). Box 6432.

ATTRACTIVE, LEGGY female, 35, strong-minded, intelligent, warm-hearted, principled, fun-loving, deep-thinking, seeks similar male for life partnership (South East). Box 6532.

GOODLOOKING MALE, 31, London born Indian professional, GSoH, personable, married seeks attractive female 20s-40s for daytime/occasional evening sensual relationship. Wining/dining etc. London/S.East. Box 6632.

SOMEWHAT ANTIQUE Chelsea artist needs naughty female for life modelling. Might suit bored housewife. Relationship guaranteed. Box 6732.

Overseas readers! Remember, you must reply to a Box Number advertiser within 2 months of the advertisement appearing.

PROFESSIONAL MALE 40s, tall, n/s, reasonably attractive, married but semi-detached, seeks possibly married woman 35-45, slim, interesting, for friendship, affair. Absolute confidentiality assured. E.Midlands/East Anglia based. Box 7733.

ATTRACTIVE LADY, 50ish, sensuous, shapely, SoH, sought by presentable businessman, 60, many interests, for uncomplicated fun relationship. SW London. Photo please. Box 7833.

NICE MALE professional (46) 5'7", dark hair, 10st, seeks naughty London female needing a good sound relationship. Box 7933.

TALL ATTRACTIVE female with attitude of Dorothy Parker sought by male, 6ft+, 35, into bad behaviour, dry wit and romance. Box 6832.

PROFESSIONAL SEAFARER (26, fit, GSoH), away for Christmas (OHMS), seeks communication from slender mermaid to lead to romance on terra firma upon return. South. Box 3433.

HUMOROUS, ATTRACTIVE, professional male, 39, in good shape, seeks long-haired, stylish lady for occasional meetings and uncomplicated relationship. Box 3533.

WITTY, CHARMING, educated, romantic and irresponsible 37 yr old bachelor, good job/house/car/airmiles/SoH/etc. seeks one good reason not to be so. Box 3633.

WEALTH DEGENERATE (40) seeks well-heeled like-minded female for general debauchery and possible merger. Phone/photograph essential. Box 3733.

OVERACTIVE LIBIDO trapped in relatively underactive body of Midlands based but foreign raised single professional male, 30, seeking single intelligent n/s female to raise activity level and bring warmth to cold winter nights. Photo appreciated. Box 3833.

WEALTHY PLAYBOY bachelor, 35, reasonably handsome, dashing and impetuous, seeks glamorous, sexy, twentysomething career girl with long slender legs, long silky hair and long red nails. West Midlands/anywhere. Good letter & photo essential. Box 3933.

MARRIED AMERICAN male, 38, London based (wife in States & approves), handsome, easygoing, successful, seeks busty, proportionately small-waisted female for ongoing safe erotic relationship. Photo please. Box 4033.

CAPTAIN SCARLET, 35, seeks Destiny Angel for indestructible love. If aged 25-36 and South-based, send photo for immediate launch. Box 4133.

MID 30S MALE seeks attractive, affectionate, n/s female for winter warmth. Berks/Oxon. Box 4233.

BARBRA, YOU forgot telephone number. Please send (5530). Mr X. Box 4333.

ATTRACTIVE, EDUCATED, artistic countrywoman (40s) seeks kind educated countryman with GSoH (Cotswolds). Box 4433.

HANDSOME IRISH male professional (27), 6ft, fit, dry SoH, one of life's drifters, seeks tall(ish) dark-haired female (24-35) for mutual drifting/dropping anchor. Box 4533.

PLUMP MATTIE Storin seeks caring Francis Urquhart. ALWPA. No adulterers. Box 4633.

TALL HANDSOME young man seeks attractive adventuress 20-35ish for racy erotic adventures. Box 4733.

MALE, 31, 5'11", 42-32-no idea!, single, no ties, but a marvellous selection of shirts, is seeking a wonderful woman. Please be 23-33, a pretty face, slim(ish), over 5'2", a non-smoker and have a great SoH. Therefore fat, ugly, miserable, smoky, pre-pubescent/geriatric midgets need not reply. I'm wealthy but not flashy and have the material things in life but no-one special to share with. I love holidays, comedy, romance, fine food, music (except rave and rap), sport, cinema — in fact most things. Please write a long letter and enclose a photograph (preferably of you) and I'll write back soon. Yorks/Lancs/Cumbria. Box 4833.

HOPEFUL MALE, 33, seeks warm, intelligent, hedonistic, discreet lady 40+ for occasional meetings and pleasure. Lancashire/Yorkshire. Box 4933.

OLD BAT SEEKS someone to hang around with. Box 5033.

BRAINY, AMUSING, attractive, slim, warm, vibrant, successful, non-smoking woman desires similarly featured, unattached, tall, fit, interpersonally able man, 40s, preferably with hair, in South Hampshire or East Devon. Box 5133.

AMERICAN OR Australian, attractive male, holiday companion required — 27-32, GSoH and fun-loving — for single, 29, female leading to a relationship if no delays en route. Box 3333.

SHY LONDON professional male, 29, single, seeks female for friendship, evenings out, possibly romance. Box 7632.

ACTIVE, ATTRACTIVE and amusing prof. male, 26, seeks longer term affectionate female. Yorks/Lancs/elsewhere. Box 7732.

DWARF (27), multi-faceted personality, seeks Snow White for friendship, fun and emotional development. Box 7433.

MICK JAGGER/ Tyler clone seeks married woman. Box 7533.

HI — I AM professional black lady 30s, young looking, slim, smart, kind, don't smoke or drink, seeking professional white gentleman 36-46, smart, kind, faithful, for friendship view marriage. Photo appreciated. Box 7633.

Replying to a PRIVATE EYE Box Number?

Box No .....
PRIVATE EYE SMALL ADS
6 CARLISLE STREET
LONDON W1V 5RG

Address your reply like this.

MORTITIA SEEKS Gomez. Box 5233.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, sensuous married woman graduate, 37, seeks tall handsome officer or gentleman for longterm fun, frolics and fulfilment. Gloucestershire. Box 5333.

TALL SLIM athletic City gent, witty, considerate, generous, 37 (married), seeks wicked but nice lady for discreet uncomplicated day-time liaison. Asian ladies welcome. Box 5433.

CITY GENT seeks slim lady, forties, for discreet relationship to spoil and enjoy good fod. Own flat. London/Home Counties. Photo appreciated. Box 5533.

DO YOU SKI? Attractive man (married), 43, looking for lovely fun fit woman to share carefree ski holiday. Let's have some sun, ski and more together. Photo/details appreciated. Box 5633.

LADIES, ARE YOU 28-35, who likes ballet, music, good manners, pubs, big motorbikes and intelligent conversation and might like this 32 year old professional male who needs you to write to him today. Cambs/Peterborough/Bedford area. Box 5733.

DESPERATE SCOTTISH woman mildly eccentric but insightful, 46, abhors idea of Christmas on her own, seeks companionable man for London outings. Box 5833.

SINGLE, 35, OFFICER of parachute troops craves correspondence to brighten my exile. Fed up returning to London from cultural deserts to even more lonely theatres, cinemas and dinners alone in London. Box 5933.

EXPATRIATE MALE 35, fit, seeks risqué correspondence with female. Returning UK Christmas. Box 6033.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE doctor, 30, part-time caring professional, part-time sarcastic bitch, seeks warm, witty, sociable guy for fun and romance, possibly lasting. Northern England. Photo appreciated. Box 6133.

SUCCESSFUL ATTRACTIVE entrepreneur (London) with Far Eastern business plans seeks attractive female friend speaking any Oriental or Asian language. Box 8128.

SUCCESSFUL MUSIC business director (London) seeks very attractive intelligent female companion/confidante. Box 5928.

SINGLE MALE, 29, tall, good humoured, attractive, solvent, seeks sincere attractive female, 24-33, for evenings out and hopefully relationship. Photo appreciated. Box 3230.

GENEROUS DIRECTOR, 46, slim, fit, seeks younger intelligent part-time mistress for outings and companionship. Central/South-West London. Travel potential. Box 3931.

SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN art dealer, very young 50, with sense of humour and very generous, looking for slim girl, any nationality, 20-30, fun loving, intelligent and tolerant. Join me for dinner when I visit London every 2nd month. Letter and photo please. Box 6631.

EAST MIDLANDS area, moderately successful 30 year old guy who 3 years ago would never have imagined writing a lonely hearts advert in a million years, would like to hear from attractive girl (22-30) who doesn't usually reply to these types of ads!! Photo appreciated, all letters answered. Box 2732.

TALL ATTRACTIVE company director, London based, wishes to meet tall attractive sophisticated woman for discreet encounters, dinners and champagne in the bedroom. Photograph and tel. no. essential. Go on, treat yourself. Box 8133.

RATHER SPECIAL, statuesque lady of striking appearance, feminine and gentle, wants playmate for fun and light-hearted pursuits. You are tall, courteous, sunny disposition. East Sussex/Kent. Box 8233.

HANDSOME HUNK 40, northerner, seeks gorgeous busty 50+ lady. Box 2633.

ATTRACTIVE, BRIGHT redhead (29) with a tendency to take life too seriously seeks intellectual liberal man with a reasonable head for alcohol and an occasional sense of perspective. Box 2733.

SLIM, TALL, attractive woman, 40, Oxbridge, married but often alone, seeks sane, witty, intelligent male friend for small adventures. Simply or in style. Travel? Talk? Dine? Box 2833.

LITERARY GRADUATE, 27, seeks witty female for laughter and romance. Box 2933.

PROFESSIONAL SINGLE English male, 44, 5'10", attractive, affluent and educated, seeks a country loving, intelligent female who is sincere, honest and caring, for the finer things in life and possibly marrige. London/Home Counties. Box 3033.

THIRTYSOMETHING SINGLE slim male with amusing past finds himself home alone and pissed off. Seeks female for fun, food, booze. Miserable sods need not reply. South/Midlands. Photo? Box 3133.

GENUINELY GOOD looking, fun loving businessman, 39, available part time to beautiful, personable, curvaceous lady for her fun, pleasure and indulgence. Photo appreciated. South/Southwest. Box 3233.

WONDERFUL WARM wild woman, Nottingham, seeks the improbable man (30s) with brains, passion and wit. Send letter that makes me laugh with photo that doesn't, and I'll reply. Box 7832.

BENEDICK SEEKS Beatrice. Box 7932.

GOOD-LOOKING GIRL 31, relaxed, sunny nature, needs somebody to love. Kind considerate professional sort preferred. Address? Box 8032.

SENSITIVE FEMALE graduate, 27, stylish, discreet, Anglo-Oriental-Caribbean, seeks worldly, courteous, older public school type. Skin Two interests. GSoH and old fashioned manners essential. City. Box 5932.

DASHING GENT, 45, of the old school, seeks proper little madam to wind him up. Box 6233.

URBANE MAN, 53 (divorced), successful, seeks personable woman companion for various weekday social functions (dinners, theatre, etc.). Should be accustomed to business circles. No marrieds, scalp-hunters or under 35s. Photo with detailed letter ensures reply. Box 6333.

ROMANTIC FEMALE,26, seeks sexy male MD (or knight) for kingsize romance. Box 6433.

UFONAUT WITH own starship seeks long-haired, sensual cosmologist to reactivate his dilithium crystals. Box 6533.

WARM CARING humorous S. Wales man, unattached 45yrs, needs to be attached again to similar lady 30-45 for concerts, cinema, travel and unparalleled joys of occasional weekend retreat. Box 6633.

WARM WITTY wonderful affectionate man wanted for love, laughs, life. You 30-40, prof, well-educ, hunky, sporty, cultured. Me 31 lively, attractive, intelligent, honest, romantic, passionate. London. Letters, photo. Box 6733.

GORGEOUS HACKETTE, 40, seeks sane, successful, soft-centred man for love and laughter (London). Box 6833.

SIMPLY FED UP of being alone. Fit male, in mind, body, and bank account, seeks attractive lady (25-35) to laugh and romance with. First time advert, make my day. Box 6933.

BLONDE GRADUATE, 22, idylic background: pianist, violinist, soprano, golfer, skier, sailor and very sociable, is tired of unsuitable boyfriends and seeks someone perfect. Box 7033.

MALE GRADUATE, witty, solvent mid-30s who likes fags and beer seeks female counterpart, Central Scotland. Box 7133.

DIARMUID, TT, working abroad, seeks long-haired Grainne (30-37). Box 7233.

CAPTAIN SCARLET (31) seeks Destiny Angel. North East. Box 7333.

Are you an idler?

THE IDLER is a new bi-monthly magazine for loafers, loiterers and loungers. Issue 2 of the voice of the idle underground is out now. For subscriptions, write to:
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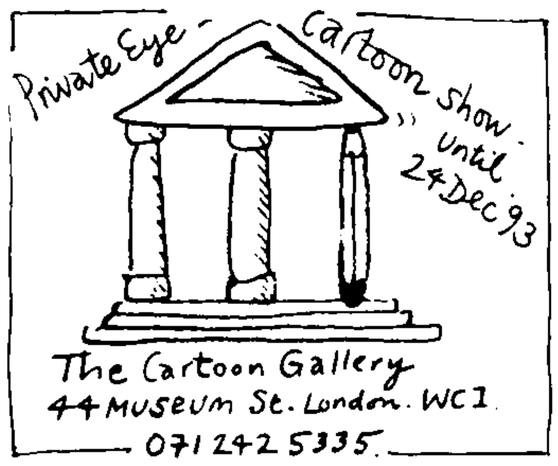
London W11 1BX



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Call one of the numbers below, put it through to a mate - then wait for the reaction!!!
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MY DAUGHTER'S PREGNANT
0338 427001
YOU OWE THE TAX INSPECTOR
0338 427002
IRATE DELIVERY DRIVER
0338 427003
LOVERS AFFAIR EXPOSÉ
0338 427004
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CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE : _____

CARDHOLDER'S NAME & ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE):

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If you simply want to reply to an advertiser, just dial the telephone number shown in your chosen advertisement and leave your details after the tone.

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REALLY LOVELY GUY, 34, 5ft 11in, Anglo-Italian, artist, available to simply smouldering siren, to enjoy vegetarian dishes & other pleasures. Tender hearted playmate preferred. Ring 0839 514036

PETITE, FOREIGN, EDUCATED lady, 37, considered cute, seeks tall, medium handsome, well educated, professional, successful, single male, under 42, London based, for friendship/marriage. Preferably Persian speaking. Ring 0839 514251

ATTRACTIVE MAN, 34, 6ft 2in, graduate, professional, slim and fit, aware, sincere, sensual, solvent, seeks attractive, interesting lady, 24-35, for intelligent chit chat and serious silliness. Ring 0839 514041

SIX FOOT FEMALE, attractive, slimmish and successful, looking for companionship and laughter with a tennis playing, skiing, theatre and arts loving male, for drinks and dinner and maybe more. Ring 0839 514270

MALE, 41, ATTRACTIVE, amusing, passionate, self-obsessed, actor/writer seeks slim, strange, sensual, successful, open, honest, independent, non-smoking female, age 25-35, for mutual exploration. Ring 0839 514044

WARM, ATTRACTIVE, VIVACIOUS, professional woman, 39, slim, sporty, loves classical music and countryside, has 3 Blind Date questions for real man seeking long-term relationship. Ring 0839 514307

GOOD LOOKING MAN, 39, 5ft 11in, with sensitivity, mind and muscle. Enjoys art and a green outdoors, seeks a woman with spirit and a love of life. Ring 0839 514075

THE SEARCH FOR A WOMAN might just be over. If you would like to listen to a selection of past, present and even future Opening Lines female advertisers, then why not try our new Library Line Service. Just ring this number. Ring 0839 514333

AMERICAN MALE, 40, good looking, hot blooded, fun, classy, sincere, successful, together, professional, seeks very shapely, very attractive, erotic love goddess, 18-35, to nest with. Ring 0839 514108

SCOTTISH LADY, fit, dark eyes hair and skin, wishes to meet attractive male, 35-42, for hill walking/friendship. Ring 0839 514195

ATTRACTIVE DIVORCEE, into smoking, drinking and all the other bad but fun things in life, 42, seeks solvent, adventurous, fit gent for fun filled times Ring 0839 514345

ARE YOU LOOKING for an attractive, educated male, in his mid twenties? If so then I could be your answer. Ring 0839 514134

40 YEAR OLD FEMALE, 5ft 8in, slim, intelligent, gregarious, successful, lively, liberal, adventurous, seeks compatible male. Ring 0839 514377

BATMAN SEEKS CATWOMAN for purrfect happiness. City male, 32, searching for unpretentious but stylish and romantic lady, 28-34, must be better looking than Robin. Ring 0839 514172

ATTRACTIVE, WARM, CARING, Aries female, seeks similar qualities from male aged between 40-50. Ring 0839 514475

(VERY?) ATTRACTIVE DOCTOR, 28, seeks slim, attractive, well dressed lady for relationship. Ring 0839 514213

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, happy, sociable, active, fun loving, seeks youthful, modern, well balanced, male companion, 55-58, for walking, back packing, skiing, travelling and having fun. Ring 0839 514537

LOOKING FOR A MAN? then why not try our new Library Line service. To listen to a selection of past, present and even future male Opening Lines advertisers, just dial this number. Ring 0839 514222

WANT TO HAVE A BALL? Two prince charmings required for two Cinderellas. Amphibians need not... Ring 0839 516828

TALL, SPORTY, ADVENTUROUS guy, 37, intelligent, n/s, City job, lives South London, enjoys both town and country. Looking for slim, attractive girl, 25-37, to share life's opportunities. Ring 0839 514450

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VICTIM!
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Mr BELCHER (burp) 0891 101 220
Mr SICK 0891 101 228
YOUR CAR SMASHED UP BY ESCAPED LUNATIC 0891 101 260
YOU HAVE WON £1,533,320.56p 0891 101 253 • Mr FART 0891 101 226
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[Tell your friend you misdialled into a Sex Chatline].
0891 101 250
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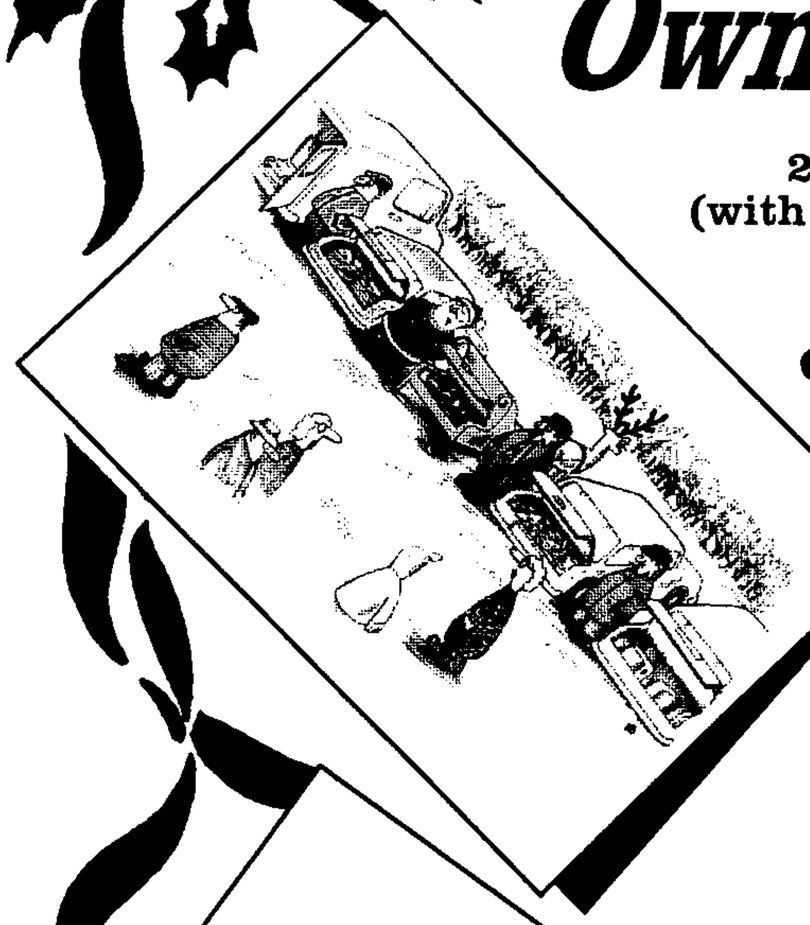

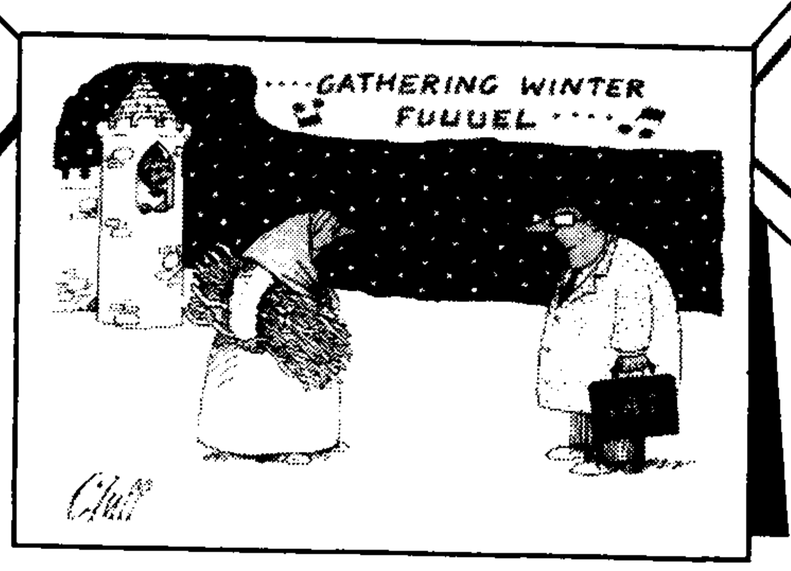

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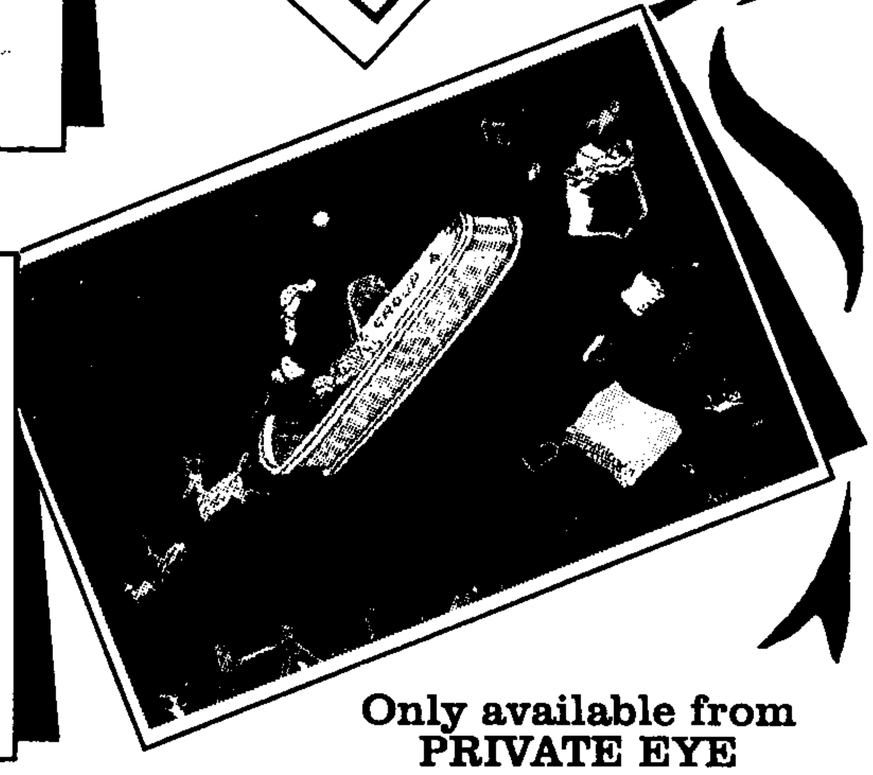

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